

## CHAPTER II.

### HISTORY.

#### INTRODUCTION.

The modern district of Saran, in ancient days, formed a part of Kosala country. Any history of the present district of Saran is bound to be a history of Kosala which included portions other than the present limits of the district. As we shall see later the present district limits came into existence only in 1866. Strictly speaking there could hardly be any parochial history of any district in Bihar in the periods prior to its formation under the British rule. Both the Pali and Sanskrit literatures, as well as ancient and mediaeval inscriptions, mention two Kosalas; *Uttara Kosala* and *Dakshina Kosala* or *Maha Kosala*. Saran and the neighbouring districts in U. P. were known as *Uttara Kosala* (North Kosala). Kosala as a country was unknown to the *Rig Vedic* hymn singers. It is in later Vedic literature that Kosala is mentioned as a powerful, respected *Kshattriya* kingdom. In this period it is no longer sufficient to dismiss Saran by stating that "Saran, lying on one of the main lines of the Aryan advance was probably occupied at an early period by Aryan races", as has been done in the previous Gazetteers. Subsequent researches have established that Saran played a glorious role throughout and not merely as a contemptuous eastern borderland of the Kosala country. Its strategical importance is undeniable, since on its border, on the other bank of the Gandak, commenced the territories of Janakas of Videha. History of Kosala is the history of all its component parts; and not merely that of Saketa, Ayodhya or Sravasti.

It is necessary to discuss the sources of Saran's history in the context of the spirit of revised Gazetteers so that the men in the streets, the scholars, the research workers, the students and last but not the least the revenue officers, with the exception of those who had studied advanced history in their university days, will be able to appreciate the extent of our knowledge and what services they can render to the State, nation and the people. In this respect the responsibilities of the average revenue, administrative and even police officers of all ranks cannot be over-emphasized, because, on them rests the greatest charge of the nation, to record and to help to preserve examples of our national heritage, lying buried or unknown in some unfrequented corner of the district. The College Professors or the field archaeologists cannot usher in that utopia which would enable them to bridge the long hiatuses of our national history without the co-operation of the administrative officers and particularly the administrative heads of the districts.

Our principal sources are literary, since no inscription or coin of the earliest period of Saran's history has so far been discovered.

The excavations at Vaisali and Sonitpur, have no doubt thrown some welcome light on this 'dark period'; but they relate to ancient Videha and Karusha countries. What is more, the excavated materials throw little light on political, social and economic history of Saran. The literary evidence may be divided into five groups: (1) The last book of the *Atharva Veda*, *Brahmanas*, etc., and *Upanishads*, (2) The *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, (3) Panini, *Arthasastra*, *Nirukta* and *Mahabhashya*, (4) Pali literature, (5) Jaina Sanskrit and Prakrit compositions, (6) Classical Greek and Latin works.

In the later Vedic literature, the eastern regions gained greater prominence, showing the gradual extension of geographical horizon. Specially this is the case with Kosala. The extent, however, of this country Kosala differed from time to time. Thus according to Dr. Keith their earliest mention shows that Videha-Kosala was a United Kingdom. Para, the son of Atnara, who performed a *Asvamedha* sacrifice is referred to as lord of Kosala as well as Videha.\* But a tradition found in the *Satapatha Bramhana* seems to indicate that Videha was Aryanised after Kosala whose western limit was the river Sadanira, identified with Gandak, which even now forms the eastern boundary of Saran.

An analysis of the relevant passages of the *Ramayana* indicates that in early days, Kosala consisted of Oudh and Allahabad districts.† In connection with the *Rajasuya* sacrifice of Yudhishtira it is stated that Arjuna, Krishna and Bhima reached Mithila after traversing eastern Kosala—possibly Saran‡. The Kosala king, who was defeated was known as Brihadvala, who later attended the ceremonies in connection with the sacrifice. Soon after this, Karna seems to have occupied Kosala (*Vanapavan*, Chapter 253, p. 513); because in the Kurukshetra war, Brihadvala is found fighting with the Kauravas (*Udyogaparvan*, 96, 107). His son was Sukshetra, who also fought in the war. Kosala was again annexed by Arjuna, before the horse sacrifice of Yudhishtira.

According to the *Puranas*, the royal dynasty of Kosala was descended from Ikshaku. His son Vikukshi was a powerful ruler who desired to be carried on the shoulders of the Indian Zeus, Indra. Sixth in descent from Vikukshi was Sravasta, after whom the city of Sravasti, a later capital of Kosala was named. A few generations later was born Mandhata. The other distinguished monarchs of Kosala were Trisanku, Harishchandra of Sunahsepa fame, Sagara, Bhagiratha and Rituparna, who employed Nala as his charioteer, etc.

#### *Kosala as a Mahajanapada.*

- In Pali texts, Saran appears, not as the champion of imperialism, but, as one of the sixteen *mahajanapadas* in which India was divided.

\* *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, page 109.

† *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1894, pp. 321 ff.

‡ *Sabharparvan*, Chap. XXV. page 420.

The kingdom of Kosala was bounded on the west by Panchala, by the river Sarpika (Sai) in the south, on the east by Sadanira (Gandak) and on the north by Nepal. This was *Uttara* Kosala and consisted of modern Fyzabad, Gonda, Basti, Gorakhpur and Deoria districts in U. P. and Saran in Bihar. The Sakyas of Kapilavastu were included in the Kosala country.\* The Pali literature undoubtedly throws flood of light on the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of ancient Kosala; but just as it is not possible to establish the historicity of all the kings of the *pauranic* lists, so it is not possible to discriminate between the legendary and the factual elements contained in the Pali tradition.

### *Kasi and Kosala.*

It was inevitable, that Kosala monarchy was unable to maintain its supremacy unchallenged for a long time; and this is what happened in the case of Kasi. In the first stage, the legendary king of Kasi, Bramhadatta, invaded Kosala and defeated its army; *de jure* sovereign of Kosala fled to Kasi, to hide himself, but ultimately he was apprehended and ordered to be beheaded. The kingdom was ultimately restored to his son.† On the other hand the *Mahasilava Jataka* tells us that, the kingdom of Kasi was conquered by the Kosalas. The *Asataru Jataka* also records another occupation of Varanasi by the Kosalas. We may therefore conclude by stating that according to the tradition recorded in the *Jatakas*, there was no love lost between the two neighbouring kingdoms; and sometimes they were also connected by matrimony.

### PROTO-HISTORIC PERIOD.

All these events occurred before the accession to the throne of Kosala of Prasenajit. He was a contemporary of Gautama, the 7th Buddha, and was the son of Mahakosala. He consolidated the extensive conquests of his father. His character has been admirably summed up by Mrs. Rhys Davids. "He is shown combining like so many of his class all the world over, a proneness to affairs of sex with the virtues and affection of a good 'family man', indulgence at the table with an equally natural wish to keep in good physical form, a sense of honour and honesty, shown in his disgust at legal cheating, with a greed for acquiring wealth and war indemnities, and a fusiness over lost property, a magnanimity towards a conquered foe with a callousness over sacrificial slaughter and the punishment of criminals. Characteristic also is both his superstitious nervousness over the sinister consequence of dreams due, in reality to disordered appetites, and also his shrewd politic care to be on good terms with all religious orders, whether he had testimonials to their genuineness

\* *Jataka*, Vol. III, page 342; *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1931, page 412.

† *Vinaya*, Vol. I, p. 343, ff; *Jataka*, Vol. III, p. 221, ff.

or not".\* He was a great patron of both the Bramhanical and Buddhist religions; and endowed the learned institutions, the *savants* and monks of both.

### *Prasenajit and Bramhins.*

Many of the Bramhanical scholars were old, aged, elderly and advanced in years. They were designated '*Mahasala*' (महासाल) implying according to some, men of substance, influence and position; according to others, it implied Vedic institutions meant for advanced students. Each head of the institution, used to reside in a palace, with vast landed possessions, consisting of grass lands, woods and cultivations, from royal domains, with as much power over it as the King himself. In consequence, these great Bramhanical teachers of Kosala, became rich and powerful. The Pali texts supply us with the names of many. Each one of these was established in a distinct locality with control over revenue, judicial and civil administrations. Each of them was honoured as scholars of international reputations, well versed in the *Vedas*, *Vedangas* and *Itihasa*. Saran must have had many such, since it was the easternmost district of Kosala.

### *Prasenajit and Ajatasatru.*

Ajatasatru, notwithstanding lack of filial devotion, was first to put an end successfully to the great days of Kosala. The traditional account is available in the *Jatakas* and *Samyutta Nikaya*. The trouble started with the few villages that had been given to Kosaladevi, mother of Ajatasatru, by Mahakosala—her father, as bath money. Prasenajit to avenge the murder of Bimbisara and untimely death of his heart-broken sister, declared war on his parricide nephew. The actions were indecisive—both the parties enjoyed temporary victories over the other. On one occasion, Prasenajit having been defeated had to fly the country. On another occasion Ajatasatru was taken prisoner. Prasenajit gave his daughter Vajira in marriage to his captive, along with the disputed villages to his daughter. The end, however, was swift and unforeseen. Digha Charayana was a general of Prasenajit. By a *coup d'etat* he raised Prince Vidudhava to the throne. The situation is not clear, but it appears that deserted both by his army and people, the most Catholic and the last great Kosala monarch, went to solicit armed intervention of his nephew and son-in-law Ajatasatru, but died at the very gates of Rajgir, due to exposure. Final annexation was not far away.

### HISTORICAL PERIOD.

#### *Saisunagas, Nandas and Mauryas.*

The Haryanka dynasty, to which Bimbisara and Ajatasatru belonged, was replaced on the age-old throne of Magadha, by a new

\* Sage and King in Kosala—*Samyutta—Bhandarkar Commemoration Volumes* page 134.

line of kings, named Saisunagas, from the name of the founder—Sisunaga. He transferred his capital from Rajgir to Pataliputra although Vaisali was visited occasionally. Evidently ancient Videha country was more comfortable than Rajgir with its dynastic associations. The Saisunagas were supplanted by the Nandas, whose first king was called Mahapadma-Nanda. They were Sudras.\* The Puranas credit Mahapadma-Nanda as destroyer of all Kshatriyas. This as pointed out by late Dr. H. C. Roy Choudhury, possibly implies the extinction of all the dynasties which ruled in Northern India, contemporaneously with the Harayankas. The end of the Kosalan independence is probably testified by the tradition recorded in the *Katha-Sarita-Sagara*, that king Nanda had one of his camps established at Ayodhya.

The Nanda dynasty was overthrown by Chandragupta-Maurya. The inclusion of whole Kosala including Saran in India's first historical empire is undeniable. This evidence is available at Chirand, with its dilapidated and completely renovated mosque, originally built in the time of Alauddin Husain Shah of Bengal. It has supplied the evidence of Proto-Historic and historic occupations. Situated conveniently at a place where the great river Ganges could be crossed like Hajipur, Sahebpur-Kamal, Sahebganj-Manihari, Buxar, etc.,† it has an undeniable importance, which seems to have escaped the eye of antiquarians. The Ganga has changed its course now; and in doing so, has cut through a portion of the ruins of the ancient city, exposing a cliff like sequence, contained in layers and layers of occupational remains with unpainted Greyware and N. B. P. mixed up in the mud and brick walls as well as ring well soak-pits.

In Upper India, a large number of sites over a wide area, are distinguished by the occurrence of a highly individualistic pottery, called formerly, by the archæologists as 'Northern Black Polished Pottery'. Since, however, it has been found in several places in the Deccan too, the terminology had to be changed slightly, to 'Neo Black Polished Pottery' so that the abbreviation N. B. P. would not lead to confusion. This ware has been variously called as glaze, mucilaginous paint, metallic lustre, etc. Over a grey or sometimes buff or pinkish body, the colour of its surface varies from black to metallic jet blue, gold, silver, mauve or orange gold, etc.; but its lustre (shiny surface) is quite different from other 'slips' or 'washes'. They have been found at Taxila (West Pakistan), Mathura, sites in Allahabad, Varanasi, Mirzapur, Ghazipur, Balliya, Etah districts in U. P., and numerous sites in Bihar, like Patna, Sonitpur (Gaya), Indpe (Monghyr), Nathnagar (Bhagalpur), Rajgir, Giryek, Vaisali, etc.,

\* The point has been fully discussed in the Revised Patna Gazetteer under publications. (P. C. R. C.)

† That is it was a convenient ferry.

Dinajpur in East Pakistan, Indore, Jaipur, Bhopal districts of Madhya Bharat.

According to late Sir John Marshall, they were found in stratas ascribed by him to C. 800 B. C., at Bhita, in Allahabad district, which has been questioned by Sir R. E. Mortimer Wheeler. But the excavations carried out by the K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, at Sonitpur, has confirmed him partially. Outside Northern India, wherever it has been found in systematic excavations, it is associated with Mauryan and Post-Mauryan layers. In this, one feels inclined to visualise its diffusion with the Mauryan conquests, although it would be somewhat premature to be dogmatic at this stage. The popularity of N. B. P. ware was undoubtedly extensive; Eastern Rajputana, Western, South and Eastern India, all used it in some quantity. In places located at a distance from its manufacturing centre, whose identity remains uncertain it was precious and in short supply, as some sites have yielded broken pots which have sometimes been rivetted with copper pins to prolong their life. They might have also served ritualistic purposes. Dish and bowls are the common types.

The occurrence of N. B. P. at Chirand, unmistakably proves the existence of a great commercial emporium of the Mauryan times in Saran. Not merely that, it was an important centre for the river-borne trade, the national navigational highway to the international ports in the Gangetic delta. More than that, it was a great mart for exchange of commodities, since the products of the western districts of Kosala and Videha including agricultural, could easily find wholesalers at Pataliputra for North Bihar, Gaur and for overland trade routes to take them to Ujaini, Bharukachcha (Broach) and Taxila. The mounds on which the Muslim tombs are located; and the high clay ridges beyond the mosque also contain N. B. P.; indicating their existence, when Mauryan legions had hurled the Greeks beyond the Hindukush and were flying the Indian flag from the Oxus to the Krishna and from Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal. The age of the unpainted grey ware is still unsettled. Many of these were originally N. B. P., but the lustrous polish having peeled off look like a totally different class of ware.

Brihadratha, the last Mauryan king, was murdered by his General—called Pushyamitra, who having usurped the throne, founded the Sunga dynasty.

#### *Sungas.*

Panini, describes the Sungas as Bramhins of the *Bharadvaja gotra*. The existence of Pushyamitra is also confirmed by an inscription found at Ayodhya, which describes the generalissimo as '*Kosaladhipa*' (lord of Kosala) and *Senapati* (General). Though the contents of the inscription have raised a storm of controversy, due to its incomplete state they will always remain moot points. The record was

discovered by Jagannathdas Ratnakara and edited by him. G. H. Ojha discussed it in the same journal and elsewhere.\* Late Dr. K. P. Jayaswal, who was then editing the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela jointly with his friend R. D. Banerji, has contributed three papers on it. The other persons were : N. K. Bhattasali, N. G. Mazumdar and Dr. A. Banerji Sastri.† The inscription is inscribed on a stone slab on the foot of the eastern entrance of the *samadhi* of Sangad Baksh, alleged to have been erected by Nawab Shujaudaula. The building is situated at the western portion of a large enclosure known as 'Ranopali', about a mile from the town of Ayodhya.

### *The Inscription.*

The epigraph is important for more than one reasons to the historian of Saran. It is the first and only inscription which mentions Pushyamitra by name. So long, he was only known from Patanjali, Kalidasa and Buddhist Sanskrit traditions. Secondly, it confirms the *Puranas* that Pushyamitra was a General. Thirdly, it also describes him or his descendant, as ruling over Kosala. What is more, it credits Pushyamitra with having performed 'Horse sacrifice' twice. Therefore, the fact that Saran with the rest of Kosala, was a part of the Sunga dominion is undeniable. The grammarian Patanjali throws some interesting side-lights about Pushyamitra. In his commentary on Panini III.2.123, Patanjali says "Here we are causing Pushyamitra to perform sacrifice (as officiating priests)". Pushyamitra died about the middle of the second century B. C., and was succeeded by Agnimitra made famous by Kalidasa in his *Malavikagnimitram*. The last king of the dynasty was dissolute and weak. Banabhatta, the author of *Harshacharitra*, tells us that the over libidinous Sunga was murdered by his *Amatya* Vasudeva, with the help of a maid-servant disguised as his queen.‡

### *Post-Sunga.*

The dynasty founded by Vasudeva, is known as *Kanvayana* or *Sunga-bhrityas*. Their chronology has yet to be settled. While Magadha after its first imperialistic glaciation was leaving extensive detritus of cultural and political decompositions; the Greeks crossed the unguarded passes of the Hindukush and established themselves in Afganistan and West Pakistan. Patanjali in his *Mahabhashya* has left certain evidence about Greek advance in the Ganga Valley. Commenting on Panini III.2.111, on the affixing of *lan* to a verbal

\* *Nagari Pracharini Sabha Patrika, Kasi*, Vol. V, pp. 99—104 and 201 ff.; *Annual Report of the Rajputana Museum, for the year ending 31st March 1924*.

† *Modern Review*, 1924, pp. 30—32; *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. X, pp. 202—208; *Ibid*, Vol. XIII, pp. 247—49; *Modern Review*, 1925, p. 202 ff; *Ibid*, pp. 59-60; and *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. VII, pp. 160—63.

‡ *Harsha-Charitam* has been translated into Hindi by Dr. V. S. Agrawalla.

root, he states "Lan affixes added to verbal root denote universally known (action) that (happened) out of sight but within range of sight (knowledge) of the narrator". Kaiyata, the scholiast of Patanjali, clarifies it in the following way: "something that is 'out of sight' (*parokshe*) on account of its actually not being perceived is within the range of sight, if it is only capable of being witnessed; so there is no contradiction". To put it in simple language, the rule explains, how to narrate in a grammatically correct way an incident of which the speaker was not an eye witness, but knew it to have happened recently or within public memory. As examples Patanjali states: "*arunad Yavanah Saketam*, etc." The *Yavana* (the Greeks) besieged Saketa. It was a capital of ancient Kosala and was situated in Oudh. Therefore we may accept, that in the life-time of Patanjali, Saketa in Fyzabad district of U. P., had been besieged by the Greeks.

In 1914, H. Hargreaves while excavating the area to west of the Main temple at Sarnath, the ancient Deer Park, was fortunate enough to find several heads with provincial Greek crowns consisting of laurels and merlons. None of them had been found in their proper archæological context. They had been violently treated in antiquity, and had suffered arson and vandalism. They were utilised by later builders from whose building they were recovered. All the objects of this class bore traces of polish; and has rightly been ascribed to the late Mauryan period\*. It is irrelevant for our purpose, either to discuss the religious or iconographic significance of the heads, or whether they were protrait heads or not. *Prima facie*, we have to accept the evidence that they had been established at *Migadava* (Sarnath, district Varanasi, U. P.), the Buddhist holy of holies, the place where historical Buddhism was first preached by the 7th Buddha—Gautama. Surely no Indian could have done it, because, his sudden admiration for provincial Greek divinities or statues of Greek royalties at the Deer Park, at the cost of Indian nationalism and an Indian religion is inexplicable. Even the alleged anti-Buddhist attitude of Pushyamitra is an inadequate and far-fetched explanation.

The parochialism of certain scholars in U. P., have led to the explanation that Varanasi being a great centre of commerce, the Greek merchants probably established them. Actually the material is exotic in U. P., in general and Varanasi in particular, where for millenniums, the architects and sculptors have consistently used buff sandstone of Chunar. But, why should the people of ancient *Kasi* kingdom, permit foreigners to establish these images or statues, where the 'wheel of law' of Buddhism was first turned, as a mark of impotence of the Indians, to guard their holy places passes human comprehension. The rational answer possibly lies in the recognition of the objective evidence they supply of the Greek raid up to Varanasi, after the siege of Saketa, referred to by Patanjali. Saran, *terra-incognita* to Indian

\* Sunga Sculptures in Banares—A study—*Roopa Lekha*, New Delhi, Vol. XXIII, pp. 20—36.



archæologists, has however, yielded some material of this nature. This is the find of Indo-Bactrian coins in the village of Papuar in Siwan subdivision, three miles east of Siwan, as noticed by Dr. Hoey.\* These few coins may or may not prove Greek occupation of Saran, but it is significant that Saketa was one of the capitals of the Kosala kingdom. What is more, the celebrated astronomer Varahamira, in his *Brihat Samhita* (I. 38),† states that the Greeks reached as far as Pataliputra.

### *Sakas and the Kushanas.*

In the first century before the birth of Christ, the *Sakas* displaced the Greeks in Baluchistan, Kafiristan, Peshawar, Sindh and probably Hazara district of West Pakistan. One line of satraps (*Ksharapas*) established themselves at Mathura. But their advance in the Gandak Valley need not be seriously entertained. They were followed by a people known as the Imperial Kushanas. The greatest of these was Kanishka. The coins of the Kushanas are found in hundreds at a small deserted sites in Basti district and have also been met with in Gorakhpur, Balliya (Khairagarh) and Deoria districts of U. P. In Bihar, Patna, Belvadag, in Ranchi district, Buxar in Shahabad district, Bedivan in Champaran district have yielded Kushana coins. Three copper Kushana coins were found at Belwa, including one of king Kanishka. They are now in the Patna Museum. Inscriptions of Kanishka have been found at Sarnath and at Sahet-Maheth (in Gonda district)—ancient Sravasti, for a long time, the capital of the Kosala country. All these indicate the possibility of Saran having formed a part of the Kushana empire.

### DARK PERIOD.

"The History of India during the third century A. D., for which reliable sources of information are lacking, has been rightly characterised as one of general obscurity, when with the extinction of the Kushana and the Andhra empires, the country must have been split up, as suggested by the *Puranas*, into a number of independent states ruled by princes of different families, native or foreign, probably fighting amongst themselves for superiority"‡. It was at this time that Ptolemy mentions a people called *Murundas* as *Mourandai*. The *Vayu Purana* mentions a *mlechcha* tribe called the *Murunda*. If Ptolemy could be relied upon, then they would have to be placed somewhere in North Bihar. The identity of the *Murundas* is clarified by later commentator like Hemachandra, who identified them with the 'Lampakas' who lived near the Kabul river. It shows that even in the time of Hemachandra, the fact that *Sakas* had come from the north was well-known. The word *Murunda* is a *Saka* term. The

\* *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1900 pp. 80 ff.

† The verse to certain extent is met with in *Gargi Samhita* too. Probably an ancient plagiarism JBORS. Vol. XIV, page 402.

‡ B. C. Sen—*Some Historical Aspects of Inscriptions of Bengal*, page 200.

*Saka* language is now extinct. Translated into Sanskrit it means a 'lord of the *Sakas*', the exact Indian equivalent being *Svamin*, which has been used by many *Saka* rulers of India. It is these people, who are possibly referred to as Magas, in Bihar folk tradition. According to some ethnologists the Bhuinhars are descended from these *Saka-Kushana* tribes.

Later on possibly, Devarākashitas, mentioned in the *Puranas* as enjoying sovereignty of Kosala, Pundra (North Bengal including Saharsa and Purnea districts), Odra, etc., ruled over the areas. Still later, western part of the *Kosala* country, that is Oudh, was occupied by the Guptas, since the *Puranas* mention Saketa as a part of the territories of the Guptas. That Saran was included in the empire of the Guptas nobody can deny.

#### IMPERIAL GUPTAS.

The evidence is furnished by the tradition about the origins of the Guptas. It is not correct to state that "Gupta families or clans existed in India from very early times".\* But, persons having the term 'Gupta' affixed to their names are indeed known from the records of the Andhras, Barhut inscriptions and other early Bramhi epigraphs. In the Gupta inscriptions, the first two members of the dynasty are not given great deal of importance; and due to lack of evidence, we have to leave undecided, the question whether they were independent or not. The epithet *Lichchhavi-dauhitra* in Gupta records, and a class of coins issued by them which bear on one side (obverse), the figures and names of Chandagupta I and Kumaradevi, and on the back side (reverse), a goddess seated on a lion along with the legend *Lichchhavayah*, are indeed significant. The ancient Lichchhavi people survived till the fourth century of the Christian era, and then completely vanished like similar republican tribes elsewhere in India. They used royal titles while enjoying a (republican) oligarchical constitution; because Kautalya says that they were *rajasabdopajivinah*. That is, they used royal honorifics and were not enjoying any 'hereditary monarchical constitution in actual practice'.

According to Pargeiter the *Puranas* furnish the information that "Kings born of the Gupta race will enjoy all these territories, namely, along the Ganges, Prayaga, Saketa and Magadha". Prayaga is old Vatsa country, made immortal by Bhasa, in modern Allahabad district with portions of Fatehpur, Varanasi and Mirzapur districts. Saketa as already noted stands for Oudh, whose capital it was. Magadha consisted of present Patna, Gaya and Shahabad districts. But the identity of the country 'along the Ganges' (*Anu-Ganga*), has never been established. Beyond Allahabad and Ayodhya were Antardvedi (Doab between the Ganges and Jamuna) and north and south Panchala countries. But the country to the east of Allahabad and

\* R. C. Majumdar and A. S. Altekar—*The Vakataka Gupta Age*, 1954, page 116.

Varanasi runs always along the Ganga and it may be said that Ghazipur, Balliya and Saran are indicated.\* These were the home territories of the Guptas. Now we are in a position to assess correctly the reasons of emphasis on the relationship with the Lichchhavis. The diplomatic marriage with a Lichchhavi lady cemented the way, like French and Spanish royal marriages in mediæval Europe, to establish a legal claim over the territories of the Lichchhavis. It is undeniable that Samudragupta and his descendants had Lichchhavi blood in their veins from the mother's side; and, therefore, the Guptas ruled North Bihar, not as conquerors but as legitimate successors of the ancient republican tribe. The motive behind issuing conjugate figures with the characteristic legend and the stress laid by the panygerists of the Gupta emperors on this fact, admittedly an empty hyperbole, was to keep alive in public memory the close connections that existed between the Guptas and their predecessors. *Argumentum ex silentio* is a dangerous pit-fall, much that did not actually happen and great deal of imaginary facts can be deduced by the fertile faculty of deduction. But evidence will never be forthcoming on many questions, except to permit us to infer the possibilities and probabilities within limits. That probability was in this case to counteract the centuries old republican spirit of ancient Videha country and attempts of any adventurer to establish a claim of *de jure* sovereignty.

#### POST-GUPTA PERIOD.

Dr. R. S. Tripathi has correctly pointed out "The latter half of the fifth century A.D. was a period of great ferment in Northern India, as it saw the beginning of that process which ultimately undermined the stability of the Imperial Gupta dynasty".† The history of this period and not merely that of Saran, but whole of India, is very obscure and has given rise to a spate of theories. The reconstructions are plausible but are by no means convincing except to the authors themselves. Dr. B. P. N. Sinha has hazarded the existence of a third Kumaragupta, while accusing others of improbable and far-fetched notions. In order to make an elastic chronology, he guesses the possible extension of Skandagupta's reign by a year for which there is absolutely no evidence. Even Dr. A. S. Altekar found it difficult to support his theory of a third Kumaragupta, except to point out its possibility at a later date in a footnote.‡ Yet his whole chronology is based on these hypothetical assumptions. The history of the Gupta dynasty after the death of Buddhagupta (C. 496 A. D.) is imperfectly known. A second Huna invasion seems to have taken place in the last decade of the fifth century A. D. They overran

\* e.g., *anugangam Varanasi* referred to by Patanjali and translated by Dr. B. N. Puri as Varanasi, situated on the river Ganga. B. N. Puri—*India in the time of Patanjali*, 1957. page 82. This work however is extremely uncritical.

† R. S. Tripathi—*History of Kanauj*, 1937, page 20.

‡ B. P. N. Sinha—*Decline and Fall of the Gupta Empire*, 1954, pp. 22 ff; A. S. Altekar—*The Coinage of the Gupta Empire*, 1957, page 9, footnote.

West Pakistan, East Punjab and Rajasthan and penetrated up to Malwa; but were completely checked there. This, however, did not prolong the life of the empire, which was in its death agonies. Yasodharman of Malwa, an erstwhile ally, led his army across the whole empire and reached up to Brahmaputra river in North Bengal. He might have passed through Saran, Muzaffarpur, Purnea, etc. The glories of the Imperial Guptas of Magadha went out in shame and disaster.

One by one, the provinces separated. First to go was Saurashtra and Western Malwa. In Thaneshvara, Naravardhana established the Pushpabhuti dynasty, whose last prince was Harsha. In the home land of the Guptas, Maukharis, probably one of the former imperial feudatories, established themselves at Kanauj. In Magadha, descendants of Samudragupta and Chandragupta were displaced by a new Gupta family whose first member was Krishnagupta. It is clear, that by 540 A. D. the Imperial Gupta dynasty had made their silent exit.

What happened to the eastern districts of Kosala, we have no precise information. As in the case of Chirand, discussed in a previous section, the Ganga Valley was the centre of commercial life of Northern India. The seaports of eastern India were the main outlet of the commodities, which were either transported by the Ganga or carried overland. When crowns and kings were cheap, the river navigation was likely to have proved safer. Any monarch having a rudimentary knowledge of economics perceived, that unless and until, the nerve centres of this great plain, that is the Doab, Magadha, Kosala, Tirhut were in their possession, their empty exchequer will not be able to finance their ambitious schemes, notwithstanding loot and rapine. The history of the subsequent centuries reveal these factors in all their nakedness. Unfortunately our data are extremely meagre and absence of excavations in North Bihar and Eastern U. P., has prevented the spade from coming to our aid. In consequence, it is difficult to state categorically, whether the Maukharis or the later Guptas enjoyed any permanent foothold in Saran and adjoining districts. Dr. R. S. Tripathi has observed "Excluding Asirgarh and Nirmand, we may, therefore, summarily say that during its fullest expansion the Maukhari kingdom of Kanauj extended up to Ahichchhatra and the frontier of the Thaneshwar kingdom on the west; to Nalanda on the east; on the north *it may have* touched the Tarai district; and on the south it probably did not go beyond the southern boundaries of the present United Provinces".\*

#### EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD.

##### *Harsha.*

The last Maukhari king lost his life about 606 A. D. and Harsha of Thaneshwar annexed the ancient throne of Kanauj. The story of Harsha is quite well-known. Internecine war had weakened all

\* R. S. Tripathi—*op. cit.*, page 55.

the princes of Northern India. Sasanka, king of Karnasuvarna and the hill tracts of Rajmahal, South Monghyr, Gaya and Shahabad failed to carry on war on two fronts and had to retire to the jungle tracts of Chotanagpur and Orissa. To complicate matters, the extent of Harsha's empire will always remain a moot point, but Saran might have been included in it, since a copper plate found at Madhuban records the grant of land in the Sravasti *bhukti* (division) in which Saran was included. Since his relations with Mithila and Nepal are also historically proved we shall not be wrong in assuming that Saran probably did form a part of Harsha's dominions.

Belwa is a small village in Gopalganj subdivision of Saran situated about five and a half miles north-west of Gopalganj. In this village there were two mounds known as *Bhairo-ka-asthan* and *Bhar* mound. The first one yielded a large image of Vishnu, which has since been transferred to Patna Museum. In the working season of 1918-19, late H. Pandey, then Assistant Superintendent, Archaeological Survey of India, Eastern Circle, Patna; excavated *Bhairo-ka-asthan* resulting in finds of two temples, built one above the other, in two distinct periods. Excavation was no doubt subjective. The later temple consisted of two shrines built side by side with walls 5 feet to 6 feet in width with bricks measuring  $13'' \times 8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2''$ . From one of these the Vishnu image, already referred to, was recovered, leaving no doubt about the purpose of this particular shrine. But the scope of the other could not be established. Amongst other finds may be mentioned three bronze images, one of which was a *Chaturmukha lingam* set in a *Yonipatta* of lotus pattern on the top of a *damaru* shaped pedestal. The second is also a phallus of Siva with a small pedestal, but bearing the figure of Ganesa on the rim and adorned on the outside with a trident, bull conch and the figure of a devotee. The identity of the third was not possible to determine. Pandey was more fortunate in excavating the so-called '*Bhar mound*' where seven blocks of buildings with evidence of five successive occupations of the site commencing from first century B. C. were unearthed. Punch marked coins, three copper pieces coated with silver, three coins of the Kushana dynasty, including one of Kanishka and eleven sealings were found during the excavations of the site. The destruction of the earlier temple at *Bhairo-ka-asthan*, took place possibly in the circumstances to be narrated below.

#### *Anarchy and Saran.*

Harsha left no heir. Arjuna succeeded him. Notwithstanding his two *prasastikaras*, Bana and Hiuen-Tsang, he failed to contribute any permanent feature in the political, economic, religious and cultural fields. His death in C. 648 A. D.\* brought in an era of chaos, anarchy, suffering and frustration. What was more, for the first and last time, in the history of India, an Indian king and thousands of

\* R. S. Tripathi—*History of Kanauj*, page 189, footnote.

Indians were carried away as prisoners to China. Hardy barbarians repeatedly issued from the mountain barrier on the north, defeated badly led demoralised Indian armies, sacked, burnt and looted the cities and villages. Its temples were overthrown and people condemned to unspeakable sufferings. Indian sources completely fail us. Only the invaders' reminiscences, guide us. This is the Chinese writer *Ma-twan-lin*.

### *Arjuna.*

The then Chinese emperor had sent an embassy under *Wang-hiueu-tse*.<sup>\*</sup> But before the mission could reach India, Harsha had breathed his last. By a palace revolution, Arjuna, one of his ministers, usurped the throne. For some unknown reasons not available in the Chinese records, Arjuna seems to have taken hostile attitude and refused to admit the mission. In the armed conflict that followed, the escort of the mission seems to have been worsted and *Wang-hiueu-tse* escaped with his bare life to Tibet. The Chinese envoy secured support from the Tibetan king who had married a Chinese princess named *Weng Cheng*. This king we shall have occasion to discuss in the next paragraph. The confederate army descended on the plain of Champaran with one thousand armed Tibetans and 7,000 Nepalese cavalry. They occupied the city of *Too-po-ho-lo*. The identity of this city is a moot point. According to some it was Champaran, others make it Chapra; while V. A. Smith identifies it with Tirhut.<sup>†</sup> Since the Chinese envoy easily escaped to Tibet the first battle must have taken place near the hills. Possibly they came through Bagaha pass. The city was populous. Three thousand men and women were put to the sword; and 10,000 were reported to have been drowned in the nearby river, which is probably Bagmati. Arjuna retreated possibly to Muzaffarpur or Saran and reorganised his forces.

The second battle was more disastrous. Arjuna not only lost it, but was taken prisoner, along with a large number of his army, all of whom were massacred. The victorious Sino-Tibetan army swept through the smiling plains of Mithila and Saran. In a still later battle they are reported to have taken 12,000 men and women as prisoners and 20,000 animals of different species. The Chinese records claim that in this whirlwind campaign, the invaders took 580 Indian towns; and when they returned at last, leaving rotting corpses, charred villages and cities, the devastated fields, demented women and orphan children; they took Arjuna as a captive to China. After their departure, a wild scramble by the effete princes of Northern India, such as Bhaskaravarman of Kamarupa, later Guptas of Magadha, etc., took place, but none of them were able to prevent the successes of the foreign invaders. It was from this time that

<sup>\*</sup> *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1837, page 69. Indian Antiquary, Vol. IX, page 20.

<sup>†</sup> *Early History of India* (4th edition). page 367.

the flourishing civilization in Tirhut, Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Saran went out in flames; and was gradually replaced by impenetrable jungle, met with in the nineteenth century A. D.

### *Tibetan Invasions.*

The information about the Tibetan occupation of India finds mention by Sylvain Levi.\* The Chinese punitive expedition had exhibited to the Tibetan monarch, the evident weakness of Indians and they were not slow to take advantage of it. Some time between 581 and 600 A. D. unknown to the world, a revolutionary change took place in Tibet. A rare genius like *Loun-tsanso-loung-tsan*, united the hilly tribes living in the inaccessible valleys of Tibet; and founded a powerful as well as united kingdom. His son, *Srong-btsan-sgam-po*, was a great general and statesman. He pushed forward the frontiers in all directions. The late Sir M. A. Stein found ruins of Tibetan fortifications mixed up with documents in the deserts of Central Asia, testifying to the Tibetan expansion through the tableland of Pamir at the expense of the Chinese empire. He married a Chinese princess, conquered Nepal and then married a Nepalese princess too. For 200 years, Nepal remained a dependency of Tibet. In 1947-49, *Anagarika Govinda* and *Li Gotami* went to Tibet, and succeeded in tracing the magnificent capital of *Srong-btsan-sgan-po*, art remains of which exhibited a high Indo-Tibetan culture complex. While the Chinese envoy was satisfied with Indian loot, prisoners and Arjuna, the Tibetan king who contributed only one thousand armed men, took advantage of the opportunity and annexed greater portion of North Bihar and Assam. He claims in his records that he became master of half of India.

*K'i-li-pa-pon* (650-679 A. D.) a grandson succeeded *Srong-btsan-sgam-po* (600-650 A. D.). He was able to maintain his hold over the Indian territories. His empire extended, according to Dr. H. C. Ray, up to Madhyadesa. *Khri-ldi-srong-btsan* (816-838 A. D.) is alleged to have ruled over an area, from Mongolia to the Ganges. But the anti-Buddhist policy of *Glang-Darma* (838 A. D.) produced reaction and shattered the Tibetan empire.† From *Tang* annals we learn that in 703 A. D. China woke up from its slumber; and succeeded in regaining the lost territories. Nepal and India overthrew the Tibetan yoke. The Tibetan king perished while leading the punitive expedition against Nepal. Levi has shown that Nepal was reconquered, but Indian provinces with Chinese aid possibly regained their independence. The earlier temple at Belwa was demolished in this period.‡

\* *Le Nepal*, tome ii, pp. 146 ff and 173 ff.

† H. C. Ray—*Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. I, page 193.

‡ For Chinese aid theory of Yasovarman of Kanauj, *Indian Culture*, Vol. XV; Dr. B. M. Barua Commemoration Volume.

*Other invasions.*

These were not all. A set of copper plate grants found at Ragholi, in Central Provinces, credits a chief of unknown Saila family with the killing of an unnamed Paundra (North Bengal) king. Then came the invasion of Yasovarman of Kanauj, followed by those of Lalitadiya and Jayapida of Kashmir, narrated by Kalhana Misra in his celebrated work *Rajatarangini*. It is difficult to evaluate in absence of definite evidence how far they affected Saran. The campaigns of ambitious kings of Northern India, destroyed the political equilibrium and anarchy prevailed. Lama Taranatha has left some accounts of Eastern India in this period. "In Orissa and Bengal and other five provinces of the east, each Kshatriya, Brahman and merchant constituted himself the king of his surroundings, but there was no king ruling in the country." This fact is repeated in several Pala records. The statesmanship still left in the people of Eastern India enabled them to put an end to the deteriorating situation. They elected a king, named Gopala, and assured a new era of progress, law and order. In this move they were eminently successful. The country was integrated, law and order established and trade thrived. Armies of Eastern India, like those of the Mauryan and Gupta times, again successfully exhibited their strength to subdue the North Eastern India, after long centuries of frustration, again dared successfully to take the lead for a united India.

*Pala-Rashtrakuta-Gurjara struggle.*

The origin of the Pala dynasty has already been discussed. The 'Rashtrakutas' were in all probability, descendants of some of the *Rathika* families, who were ruling over small tracts in the Canerese districts, Maharashtra and Vidarbha, as suggested by Dr. A. S. Altekar. Their home was probably in ancient Karnata. After consolidating their position in Deccan, they intervened in the affairs of the north. This was brought about by a conflict of interests in Central India and rising power of the 'Gurjara Pratiharas', a dynasty, possibly of foreign extraction and whose home was Bhillamala or Bhinmal in Jodhpur district. Chand Bardai calls them, however, *Agnikula*. The myth is absurd. They in fact belonged to the 'Gurjara' stock as we gather from references in Rashtrakuta records and Al Maasudi. Rajasekhara, however, by a later fiction calls them *Raghu-kula-tilaka*. They are now represented by 'Parihars', a backward tribe. They gained prominence in constant wars with the *mlechchhas* or Arabs of Sindh. The real founder of their glories was Vatsaraja.

It was a tragedy indeed, that these three most powerful dynasties were destined to rise at one and the same time, thereby wasting their energies and the manpower of India in a fruitless struggle for supremacy. Palas were first to take the lead under Dharampala, who having occupied the whole of Bihar and Bengal, annexed *Antarvedi* (the Doab between the Ganges and Jamuna), or the ancient Panchala



country (modern Rohilkhand), and claims to have proceeded up to Kangra. In the Western Malwa, he seems to have clashed with the Gurjaras. Vatsaraja, the then Gurjara king, seems to have fought successfully with the Palas and then brought his own nemesis by clashing with Dhruva (780 A. D.—794 A. D.), the Rashtrakuta king. Dhruva came to punish Vatsaraja, who according to some Rashtrakuta records, had become "intoxicated with the goddess of the sovereignty of Gaur which he had acquired with ease". In this way throughout the successive reigns the struggle went on. There were also enemies at home to be suppressed, both in the Pala and Rashtrakuta dominions, and each succeeded or suffered eclipse by turns.

The Gurjara empire reached its zenith, in the reign of Bhoja and Mahendrapala who ruled over an area which extended from Karnal to North Bengal and Kathiawar to Bihar. Mahendrapala's records have been found at Guneri in Gaya district, Itkhori in Hazaribagh, Biharsharif and Nalanda in Patna district. Late R. D. Banerji found an *ex-voto* record at Paharpur in the Bogra district of Eastern Pakistan. Last, but not the least, the village of Dighwa-Dubauli in Saran has supplied a copper plate dated in V. S. 955 (898 A. D.) issued in the reign of Mahendrapaladeva.\* It records the grant of land in *Sravasti bhukti*, thereby providing, if proof was necessary, that the Gurjara Pratihara empire extended up to Gandak if not further east, on the northern bank of the Ganges. *Bhukti* in ancient and mediæval India denoted a fiscal division.† It follows, therefore, that Saran in the ninth century of the Christian era was a part of *Sravasti bhukti*, just as it is now a part of Tirhut Division. Mahendrapala died leaving probably at least two sons—Bhoja II and Mahipala, not to be confused with the monarch of the same name belonging to the rival house of the Palas. The chronology henceforth is obscure. Other kings are known in the Gurjara family such as Kshitipala, Vinayakpala and Herambapala. The exact position occupied by them in the dynastic genealogy is still not known. The decline set in from this period. The powerful feudatories refused subordination, acknowledging nominal suzerainty merely and coming to the help of the imperial family sometimes when in great distress.

#### *The Last Phase.*

Notwithstanding these reverses, Saran in all probability continued to be occupied by the Palas along with other areas of North Bihar. Because, a mound called Jowhri Dih, near the village of Imadpur, in Muzaffarpur district, yielded a bronze image dedicated in the 48th regnal year of Mahipala II, of the Pala dynasty.

The Chandellas of Jejakabhukti, in Bundelkhand, also seems to have raided Saran. The Khajuraho stone inscription of Dhanga

\* *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XV, pp. 105—13.

† *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol XII, page 41 ff. and *Also Bihar Through the Ages*, pp. 53-54. The discussion is extremely uncritical.

dated in V. S. 1011 (C. 954 A. D.) tells us that he (Dhanga) cut down Gaudas,\* carried off the treasures of the Kosalas, before whom perished the Kashmiri warriors, the Malavas, the Kurus and the Gurjaras. It is evident that the Yasovarman, the Chandella, extended his territories from Himalayas to Malwa and from Kashmir to Bengal.

### *Chedi Conquests.*

A manuscript of *Ramayana* found in Nepal states in the Colophon that it was copied in V. S. 1076 (C. 1019 A. D.) when *Gaudadhvaja*, etc., Gangeyadeva were ruling over Tirabhukti.† Two gold coins of Gangeyadeva were found in the village of Dumarai, in police-station Masrakh. In all probability Gangeyadeva was a member of the Haihaya (or Kalachuri) dynasty of Tripuri. The only inscription of this king was found at Piwan a place 25 miles N. N. E. of Rewa. Al-Biruni, the famous Indo-Arabic scholar (1030 A. D.), mentions Dahala with its capital *Tiauri*, as one of the countries of India. The ruler was named *Gangeya*. Information about his reign is mainly derived from the inscription of his descendants. Thus the Goharwa land grant of his son and successor credits him with conquests of Kira (Kangra), Utkala (Orissa), Anga (Bhagalpur district with portions of Monghyr and Santhal Parganas, i.e., from Kiul river (minus the hill tracts of Jamui) including Kharagpur hills then known as *Hiranya parvata*, Monghyr (called Mudgagiri), up to Teliyagarhi; and Kuntala (Canarese districts). As pointed out by Dr. H. C. Ray, Baihaqui confirms the tradition that Gangeyadeva spent his days under the *Akshyavata* at Allahabad, i.e., the area up to Allahabad was his kingdom. Dr. Ray also drew our attention to the fact, that when Ahmed Niyaltingin, a general of the Yamini king Ma'asudi (C. 1030–1040 A. D.) invaded Varanasi, the city is alleged to have belonged to the territory of "Gang".‡

By this time the empire of the Gurjara Pratiharas had become confined within Kanauj. The Chandellas had declined after the death of Vidyadhara. Therefore the claims made on behalf of Gangeyadeva by Chedi court poets can be accepted. The Kuntala king defeated by him was probably Vikramaditya V—Tribhuvanamalla (1009–1011 A. D.), the grand-son of Taila II.§ The epilogue of Gangeya's reign is very sad. He suffered defeats at the hands of the Paramara Bhoja as stated in *Parijatamanjari*. Chandella Vijayapala too claims victory over him. That he had met with disastrous defeat is also evident from the inscriptions of his son. Gangeyadeva issued a remarkable series of gold, silver and copper coins, simple in design but extremely elegant. On the obverse, the legend containing king's name and on the reverse the nimbate figure of goddess Lakshmi,

\* Inhabitants of Gaur.

† H. C. Ray—*Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II., p. 773; and Elliot, Vol. II, page 123.

‡ *Ibid*, page 774.

seated cross-legged. The type was evidently derived from Imperial Gupta issues.\*

Gangeya died in 1041 A. D., and was succeeded by Karna or Lakshmi-Karna, his mother being Dehatta. Traditions as well as epigraphic evidence makes Karna one of the greatest conquerors. A mediæval Indian Napoleon, Merutunga in his *Prabandhachintamani* and *Rasmala* by Forbes (Oxford, 1924) credits him with extensive conquests. The Tibetan tradition state that Karna overran Magadha (South Bihar) and destroyed many Buddhist *Viharas* (temples) and *aramas* (monasteries). The Bheraghat inscription of his grand-daughter-in-law records that he ruled over Pandeya (South India), Murala (Malabar), Kunga (Salem and Coimbatore), Vanga (now in East Pakistan), Kalinga (Ganjam) and Hunas. The last named probably occupied the hill tracts of the Punjab. The Karanbel inscription adds the names of Chola, Gaur and Gurjara. Some of these claims are confirmed by inscriptions of other dynasties. Thus the eastern conquests of Karna are proved by the records of the Palas and the Varmmans of Vikramapura. In this campaign Karna got one of his daughters, Yauvana-Sri, married to Vighrahapala III, while another, named Vira-Sri, was married to Jatavarniman. The above discussions make it quite clear, that for a time at least, he ruled over the territory, extending from Benares and the Mahi river in the west to the delta of the Ganges in the east, and from the Ganges and Jamuna Valley up to the upper courses of Mahanadi, Wainganga, Wardha and Tapti.†

#### *Sodhadeva.*

A cultivator discovered a land grant in his field in the village of Kahla, in Gorakhpur district. In its prose portion we are informed that from his residence at Dhuliaghatta, Sodhadeva, the son of *Maryadasagardeva* granted land to 14 Brahmins after bathing in Gandak on *Uttara Sankranti* day of V. S. 1134 (1077 A. D.)‡ The founder of the dynasty was an unnamed *Rajaputra* (prince). He probably ruled in the eighth century A. D. He is reported to have captured the lord of 'Vahali', defeated many kings of the east, and lowered the fame of the king 'Kirttin', etc. It is doubtful if he was ruling in Gorakhpur region. He was followed by Sivaraja and Sankaragana I. The last named prince was granted freedom from fear by Kokkalla (C. 860–900 A. D.). Gunambodhi, the next king received some land from Bhojadeva and stole the fortune of the Gurjaras. Ullabha, the next king was a nonentity and was succeeded by his brother Bhamana, who distinguished himself in war against Dhara. Then followed five rulers, Bhima, the last of whom was dethroned in V. S. 1037 (980

\* R. D. Banerjee—*Prachina Mudra* (in Hindi), Kasi Nagari Pracharini Sabha.

† H. C. Ray—*op. cit.*, Vol. I, page 779.

‡ *Epigraphica India*, Vol. VII, pp. 85–93.

A. D.) when their headquarters were at 'Gokulaghatta' in favour of Vyasa *alias* Maryadasagara. His son was Sodhadeva.

Sodhadeva was described as the life of the bank of 'Sarayu', and he bathed in Gandak before making this grant. It is clear therefore that his dominions included Deoria Gorakhpur and Saran in Bihar. His titles indicate that taking advantage of the political chaos he had declared independence. From the effigy of the Bull on his seal, we may conclude that he was *Saiva*. Nothing else is known about him and about his successors. Probably the glories of this small feudal family was crushed by Govindrachandradeva of the Gahadavala dynasty (1114–1155 A. D.), one of whose inscriptions was discovered at Shahet-Mahet in Gonda district—ancient Sravasti dated in V. S. 1176 (1119–1120 A. D.), and a land grant of his was also found in the village of Don Buzurg,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of Mairwa railway station dated in 1176 V. S. All this show, that in this year of 1119-20 A. D., Govindachandra was pushing towards the east. Gorakhpur, Deoria and Saran were annexed to the last Kanauj empire.

#### *Plastic Activity.*

The second temple at Belwa was probably erected at this time. It was a temple of Vishnu. Belwa was also a place of Buddhist worship, since seals bearing at the centre image of Buddha in the earth touching attitude with possibly the Buddhist creed stamped on the edges, now lost, were also found. Other places in Saran have also furnished evidences of a vigorous plastic activity between C. ninth century A. D. to twelfth century A. D.

Art is not merely the plastic expression of any particular idea. Rather it is the expression of the ideal which the artist can realise. Beauty is theoretical and abstract and it is merely the elementary basis of plastic activity. The village of Eksaran, in police-station Ekma, has supplied such material. The first of these images is of Vishnu-Trivikrama, but not damaged like that of Belwa. He is accompanied by Lakshmi and Sarasvati, along with his usual *avudhas*. On the back slab are found miniature figures depicting different *avataras* of Vishnu. The second image also is of Vishnu-Trivikrama, but the black slab does not contain the figure of *avataras*. The third is a unique image of dancing Ganesa. Though lacking in spirited modelling and elasticity of design, nevertheless they are charming products, furnishing objective evidence of the decline of the Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculptures towards the end of the twelfth century A. D. The free fantasia of design was lost and linear rhythm instead of flowing is stiff. The motifs and companion figures stand out from the background lifeless and inert without movements. All indicating that the free impulse to create had been throttled by canon and the plastic activity had become stereotyped. Instead of an art it had become a craft of image-making. A work of art always surprises us; it works its effect before we become conscious of its presence.

What we expect in a work of art, is the artist to reveal something to us that is original and transcendental. Art in the highest calls for high objective depiction for the expression of the subjective states of mind and emotion; and for the recognition of the transcendental all enfolding life of the cosmos. When these elements are nobly and generously present in the subdivisions and inter relations of the sculpture or painting they touch the sensitive observers with the æsthetic sanctification that only the highest art can communicate. Sometimes the exquisite austerity may tend to obscure the personal element of the artist in the calm depiction of super personality. Nevertheless, humanity in the form, will give free rein to the joy of the artist so that the æsthetic will not be cold but patent and pulsating. Sometimes they conceived and designed in colossal size; the form's graceful pose, refined expression, along with balance and poise in repose, at once captivate the mind and capture the gaze. The pose, with a slight swing on the waist line, found in many images, is suggestive of lively movement, in a figure which in its origin and conception was bound to be earthbound. The chiaroscuro have often been carefully marked and the life-like effect obtained by an accentuation of the outline. Occasionally the artist delineated the figure with extraordinary skill, not only as regards form and high level of artistic skill; but also as regards life-like effect and inner expression. In these specimens found at Saran, none of these qualities are met with, indicating the conclusion suggested above. Because, there is a true relation between the artist and the contemporary culture, which is one of the problems that so much concerns us today. The period and the civilization, endow the form, and even dictate the content of a work of art; but the power that integrates forms and raises them to the scale of art is determined by the individual genius of the artist.

#### LATE MEDIEVAL PERIOD.

##### *Advent of the Turks.*

In the year 1193 A. D., Hindu and Buddhist Turkish population of Afganistan converted to Islam, succeeded in securing a wedge to enter the ancient Kuru-Panchala country. Islam had been hammering at the gates of India since seventh century A. D., when Muhammad Ibn-al-Kasim won a bridgehead in Sindh, after more than two hundred years of effort by the Caliphate. Beyond Multan and Jaiselmer, however, they could not proceed. The inscriptions of the Gurjara Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas and the Paramaras, as well as statements of Ma'asudi testify to many indecisive actions. But after the two battles of Taraon or Tiraori, the situation changed. It was not merely crashing the gate, but a disastrous calamity. At first, Bihar was not involved but after the fateful battle of Chandawar in 1195 A. D., when the aged Gahadvala (Vulgo Gharwar) monarch, Jayachandra lost the battle after thrashing the Turco-Afgan army almost to the point of defeat, all chances of an independent India

were lost. Even then a correct analysis established that, neither the Sultan of Ghor nor Qutb-ud-din Aibak dared to press their advantage; but had to remain contented by making Ganga near Varanasi their frontier and endeavouring to consolidate their gains in the Jamuna Valley and the Upper Ganges Valley where, Prince Harishchandra, the son and heir to the Gahadavala throne, carried on resistance from the jungles of Jaunpur and Machchlisahar. No historian has cared to emphasise the point that South Bihar and portions of West and North Bengal were conquered by private enterprise, without any armed, economic or active support from Sultan of Ghor or his Viceroy at Delhi.

Recently, uncritical attempts have been made to explain that "Bihar must have felt the weight of Muslim armies and also the zeal of Muslim missionaries long before its conquests by Muhammad Ibn Bakhtyar Khalji".\* There could not have been a greater misstatement of facts. *Turushkadanda*, mentioned in the Maner plates of Govindachandra, grandfather of Jayachandra, is not peculiar to the record or the area itself. It was a kind of tax which has been repeatedly mentioned along with many others, from which a village granted to a Brahmin was exempt, according to the ancient usages of this country. This was the custom in ancient and mediæval India in making land grants. That is why, these are such a valuable source to the historian of India, because, they throw a flood of light on the fiscal, economic and official organisations of the age. Govindachandra's land grants have been found in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and at Chhatarpur in Central Provinces. In majority of these *Turushkadanda* is mentioned. It was possibly a special levy to maintain an organisation to check Muslim raids from East Punjab.

The catholicity and emotional sense of chivalry undoubtedly led the Hindus to show great latitude to Muslim spies and travellers, like Sulaiman and Ma'asudi. This is not true of Bihar only. Because Ma'asudi tells us that, 'Balharas', that is, the Rashtrakutas of Deccan were great friends of Islam.† Therefore, while we cannot completely rule out the possibility of individual Muslim *Fakirs* settling in Hindu territories, due to their enlightened despotism; large colonies were out of the question. Tarnath's story, because it has never been accepted as balanced history, since it is a compilation of legends, folk traditions and myths; has been wrongly interpreted. Last but not the least, the term *Turushka* does not mean a Muslim, since before the mass conversion of Hindu and Buddhist Turks in Afghanistan and Baluchistan, all these were non-Muslims. *Udichipati Tikina*, mentioned in the Nalanda inscription of Malada, was a Buddhist Turk. *Tikina* is the Sanskritized form of Turkish *Tegin*; such as Alaptegin, Sabuktegin, etc. Genghiz Khan, the world conquerer, was a Buddhist.

---

\* *Current Affairs*, page 6.

† Elliot—*History of India*, Vol. I, page 4.

Shamanism even now exists in Siberia. The Hindu Turks took service under Kashmir kings and are referred to in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*. The story, that on entering Nadia, Mahammad Ibn Bakhtyar Khaliji and his companions, were mistaken for horse dealers from Northern India, lends colour to the view, that the people of Southern Bengal were well acquainted with the horse dealers from the North. Tradition can only be accepted as materials of scientific history, when it is confirmed by more reliable evidence.

Lastly, Bihar has always been an extensive land, marvellously adapted for defence and war of attrition, with great economic potential. Its rich fertile soil, large navigable rivers, primeval forests, its populous and wealthy cities and villages, have always attracted invaders. In evaluating its proper historical contributions, not merely tradition and *mal-fuzes* have to be drawn upon, but, its physical features, possibilities and facts have to be impartially analysed. It is a historical inexactitude, to state that millions of Bihar's inhabitants tamely submitted to the fanatical zeal of Islam. The Rohtas Valley remained in Hindu hands till the sixteenth century A. D. This has been admitted by Abbas Sherwani. The whole of Chotanagpur Division was never conquered by Islam, even in the great days of the Mughals. The Khetauris of Santhal Parganas and hill tracts of South Monghyr, like Kharagpur, were free people. Kharagpur was conquered and the boy king converted to Islam in the reign of Jahangir. In the fifteenth century A. D. Bhairavendra of Unga hills, in the Aurangabad subdivision of the Gaya district, was an independent prince. If that were the conditions in South Bihar, what about North Bihar in general and Saran in particular? This digression was necessary, to emphasise the magnitude of our ignorance, due to lack of intensive researches in local history, to fill up the hiatuses. A proper balance-sheet showing Bihar's sufferings and sacrifices, the successful resistance of the Bihari people to Muslim encroachments is lacking. Even when, major portions of South Bihar had been overrun, Saran, Muzaffarpur, Champaran, Saharsa, Purnea and Darbhanga were comparatively independent.\*

#### *Early Muslim Rule in Saran.*

The real history of Muslim rule in Saran, is very imperfectly known like that of its neighbouring districts. The lost history of these jungle tracts, was, however, not less glorious than that of ancient Kosala. The sources of information are indeed scanty and scattered. Nevertheless, if any picture has taken definite shape it is that, two definite facts emerge from the chaos, rabble and shambles of centuries. First, it was never conquered by the Muslims till the fifteenth century of the Christian era. Lacking any central organisations, leaders to lead them, resistance was led by small feudal lords

---

\* Mithila was not conquered by Bakhtyar. The evidence of a late work like *Riyaz-us-Salat* cannot be accepted for the period.

of previous regimes from their mud-walled *garhs*. The Turco-Afghans had to lead repeated expeditions, to subdue them. On arrival of the well-equipped armies, the neighbourhood submitted tamely and paid tribute; but as soon as their back was turned, they assumed independence and the promised tribute was never paid. Muslim shrines were established at Bedivan in Champaran. The Tughluqs established a mint town at Tughluqpur in Darbhanga. Simraon with its seven walls and moats went out in flames. The princes of Mithila were repeatedly attacked. But all these were temporary gains, the Muslims gained no permanent advantage out of them. But even these small references are absent about Saran. The second stage starts in the fifteenth century, when a new policy was enunciated by Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah (1493—1519 A. D.), who started establishing small Muslim military outposts to colonise these tracts; and to keep Hindus in check. This will be discussed later.

To evaluate the evidence, it is necessary to appreciate the connotation of the term 'Tirhut'. Tirhut is the vulgarised form of the ancient name 'Tirabhukti' found on many seals, inscriptions and manuscripts. Whenever invasions of any part of North Bihar have to be referred, Persian annalists consistently used the term 'Tirhut' while ancient Magadha was denoted by 'Bihar'.

Exactly when Turkish troops crossed the Ganges to carry fire and sword in the eastern part of the ancient Kosala country, cannot be determined with any certainty. Since, however, it was merely the matter of crossing the Ganga, we shall not be far from the truth in assuming that sporadic raids of the villages in the neighbourhood of Ganga were carried on sometimes as a matter of State policy and sometimes on individual initiative for loot and women. The crusaders of Islam in Eastern India lacked both. Mulla Taqui's statement about invasion of Tirhut, confirmed by sixteenth century texts, have to be accepted with great caution. The libraries of Gaur had undergone great deal of devastations by that time, e.g., the looting by Arsalam Khan. Even the earliest Muslim historiographer, Minhaj-ud-din Siraj has committed innumerable mistakes. Thus he says Lakhnawati was made the capital, but when it was captured by the Muslims he has not specified. As pointed out by late R. D. Banerji, *Tabakat-i-Akbari*, *Muntakh'bt-ut-Twarikh* are not very dependable for this period and *Feristha* is full of legends and fictions. Ali Mardan Khalji is reported to have occupied 'Narayankoe', which is probably abbreviation or scribes' error for 'Narayanpur *ab-i-kos*' or Kosi that is Narayanpur on the river Kosi, to be identified with Jalalgarh in Purnea district, as first pointed out by Dr. K. R. Qanungo. It was in the neighbourhood of Gaur or Lakhnawati; and was the limit on the north-west of the Muslim kingdom in Bengal.

It was not till the reign of Sultan Ghyas-ud-din Iwaz (1211—1226 A. D.), that Tirhut agreed to pay tribute. Iltutmish (1210—1235 A. D.) placed Bihar under Ala-ud-din Masud Jani in 622 H., but the



area represented by modern Saran district was possibly not included in the new viceroyalty. It was, therefore, no small credit on the part of the petty zamindars of Saran to remain independent, when all the principal and most renowned Rajput dynasties of mediæval India, had succumbed to the zeal and fanaticism of Turco-Afghans. The Paramaras, the Chauhanas, the Chandellas, the Haihayas, the Gahadavalas, the Senas had ceased to exist; but the indigent descendants of ancient Kosalas, notwithstanding desecration and massacre kept the flag flying. That history of Saran and its adjoining jungle tracts has never been investigated, far less told.

#### *Balbans and Saran.*

In 1282 A. D., Bughra Khan was made Governor of Bengal, by Ghyas-ud-din Balban (1265—1287 A. D.), Sultan of Delhi. On his death in 1282 A. D., the Turco-Afghan *amirs*, placed Muiz-ud-din Kaikobad, son of Bughra Khan, on the throne of Delhi. Bughra Khan declared his independence at Lakhnawati, assuming the name of Nasir-ud-din Mohammad-Bughra Shah (1282—1291 A. D.), Kaikobad soon fell in evil company; and commenced murdering the loyal servants of his grandfather. Bughra Khan appreciating that the knell of Balban empire had been sounded started for Delhi. The father and son seem to have met on the banks of Sarayu (*sic.* Ghogra). The exact place of the meeting cannot be determined. Revelganj in Saran was once situated on the junction of Gogra and Ganges. Its commercial importance decayed when the junction shifted towards the east. There is another junction near Turtipar in Ballia district. Therefore, for lack of details, it is not possible to identify the place of meeting of the son and the father. But the *Ain-i-Akbari* definitely says that it was in Oudh. The meeting was successful, even if it failed to contribute permanent results. Nasir-ud-din was recognised as the independent king of Bengal, while his son became Sultan of Delhi.\* According to *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, Firoz Shah (1351—1388 A. D.) started from Delhi to fight Shamsu-ud-din Ilyas Shah of Bengal (1339—1358 A. D.). Instead of following the southern route he is reported to have marched by the northern bank of the Ganges and reached the environs of Gorakhpur. It is alleged that the Hindu *Rajas* of this area had not paid their tribute regularly. But the arrival of the imperial army in the neighbourhood of Gorakhpur and Kharosa they came to pay tribute, undertaking to be of good behaviour in future. The detailed account of the campaign is available but no part of Saran is mentioned. Since, however, he could not have reached the confluence of the Kosi and the Ganges, wherever it was in the fourteenth century, without passing Saran, we may assume that, it was annexed to the Tughluq empire. Before that Shams-ud-din Ilyas also seems to have occupied Saran. Because a later work *Tabakat-i-Akbari* states, that Ilyas

---

\* Ghyas-ud-din Tughluq did not in all probability conquer Saran.

extended his dominions up to Varanasi. Hajipur on the other side of the Ganges and Samastipur were supposed to have been founded by him. A Newari inscription discussed by Dr. Jayaswal mentions an invasion of Nepal by *Suratrana Shamsdina*.<sup>\*</sup> All these clearly demonstrate that North Bihar had become a buffer State between Bengal and Delhi Sultanates. Firoz had to march again in 259 H., *via* Gorakhpur-Chakajit to rout Sikhandar Shah (1388-89 A. D.), the son and successor, of Ilyas Shah, which confirms the above hypothesis. It is, therefore, difficult to agree with the view that Tughluq sovereignty extended over whole of North and South Bihar as well. It was superficial. This is also true of the area now designated as 'Saran'.

### *Saran and later Afghans.*

Mahmud Tughluq (1394-1396 and 1399-1413 A. D.) had sent Khawaja Jehan, entitled *Malik-us-Sharq* (the lord of the east), to rule over Oudh, Prayag and Rohilkhand in 1393-94 A. D. The charge was more important than that of the other Viceroys. Because, actually he was the Indian proto-type of the Carolingian *Marechals* of the frontier. He extended his authority as far west as Koil (Aligarh), and on the east up to Tirhut in Bihar. There was no question about the success of his policy. The suffering of the countryside and its people was not a matter of sufficient importance before the greed of the Turco-Afghan overlord was satisfied. Most of these wars were not carried out by the *vizir* himself, but by his adopted son, Karanful. Sitting in the palace of Vijayachandra, the father of Jayachandra, at Zafarabad near Jaunpur, the stern old Afghan Vizir's heart probably swelled at the success of his adopted son, who carried fire and sword through the jungles of Gorakhpur, Saran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Purnea, Saharsa, etc. Khawaja Jehan died in 1399 A. D., after declaring his independence and was succeeded by Karanful, who assumed the royal name of Mubarak Shah (1399-1402 A. D.). He died on march, in 1402 A. D.; and was succeeded by his younger brother, Shamsu-ud-din Ibrahim Shah (1402-1436 A. D.).

The situation had changed. Raja Ganesa had seized the throne of Bengal, the accounts of the activities of the Raja Ganesa are only available from the *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, a work of his enemies, as observed by Blochmann and R. D. Banerji. It is hardly fair to blame them, if their writings did not breathe the spirit of a Thucydides.† After 1193, this is a great disadvantage for those who had the patriotism and courage to oppose aggressive Islam, particularly those Indians, who endeavoured to stop Islamisation of Eastern India. At the request of Nur-utb-ul-Alam, Ibrahim Shah Sharqi is supposed to have invaded Bengal. Both *Feristha* and Badaoni are silent about his Bengal

<sup>\*</sup> *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, 1936, Vol. XXII, p. 81 ff.

† *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XIII, 1873, part I, page 264, R. D. Banerji—*History of Bengal*, Vol. II, page 165.

expedition. By which route he proceeded is also not actually known. Tirhut might have unsuccessfully opposed him as mentioned in *Purushapariksha* of Vidhyapati, but about Saran we have no evidence.

It is not until 1493 A. D., that we again receive any information about Saran. By that time, the glories of the Sharqis of Jaunpur had become one with Nineveh and Tyre. Bahlul Lodi had succeeded in replacing the bankrupt energies of the Tughluqs; and Hussain Sharqi (1458—1479 A. D.) the last independent king of Jaunpur was living as a refugee in Bihar. The period is confused but we have some information. We see a new spirit, colonization of unemployed Muslim to act as a check to the unconquerable spirit of Hindu zamindars. It included both the northern and southern banks of Ganga. The ruins of mosques, tombs, monasteries throughout Saran, mounds representing the ruins of the earlier civilisation, testify to the attitude of the Lodis and Alla-ud-din Hussain Shah of Bengal.

During this period the only important item is an alleged raid of Orissa by Hussain Sharqi. He also sent Mubarak Khan, son of Tatar Khan, Governor of Sambhal, as state prisoner to Saran in 1478 A. D.; but as already mentioned he was defeated by Lodi troops and Jaunpur occupied in 1484 A. D. Leaving his son Barbak Shah as ruler of Jaunpur; Bahlul returned to Delhi to die in 1488 A. D., and was succeeded by Sikandar Lodi (1488—1517 A. D.). It was Sikandar Lodi who placed Jaunpur under Jamal Khan Sarangkhan, the patron of Sher Khan. Hussain's vain desire to regain his patrimony, brought Sikandar Lodi to Bihar in 1494 A. D. The Sharqi king, unable to resist, retreated to Kahalgaon and died there.

In the meantime, a revolution had taken place in Bengal, by which Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah (1493—1519 A. D.) had ascended the Afghan throne of Bengal. The final spots of his inscriptions establish the wide extent of his kingdom. These are Malda, Kheraul, Babar, Suti and Shaikherdighi in Murshidabad; Dacca; Munghyr Shah Nafa's Mosque; Gaur; Ismailpur, Narhan and Cherand in Saran; Bonhara in Patna; Tribeni in Hooghly; Pandua; Sonargaon; Sylhet in Assam; Tiperah; Birbhum; Chakdah in Nadia. Amongst these the epigraphs found at Ismailpur, Cherand and two other at Narhan, still not edited are relevant for our purpose, proving that Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah's conquests included Saran. According to Ismailpur inscription in 906 H. (March, 1501 A. D.) the mosque had been erected at this village by one nobleman entitled "*Majlis-us-Majalis*". The Cherand inscription informs us that in 909 H. (1503-04 A. D.), Ala-ud-din had erected a Jami Maszid at this place.\* These two inscriptions are of extreme significance for the history of North Bihar during early Muslim rule and not merely of Saran. In the first place they prove that 'Tirhut' in Muslim history does not stand for merely the modern district of Tirhut but whole of the present Tirhut Division, that is,

\* *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1874, part I, page 340, note.

the whole of North Bihar. Secondly, they further prove that colonisation of the jungle tracts of ancient Kosala country was initiated by Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah of Bengal to keep the recalcitrant Hindu *Rajas* in check. Neither Khaj Malik's of Lakhnawati, Balban's of Bengal, nor Tughluqs, Syeds of Delhi or Illyas Shahi kings had been able to conquer North Bihar completely or to subjugate it. But building of mosques, etc., indicate unmistakably, that religious edifices were being erected, at the cost of the Hindus, to meet the spiritual needs of the new Muslim population in Saran. Muslim divines and militia men were being settled there. This policy of colonization was carried to its logical end by the Lodis. On the advent of the Mughals, the Afghans in Bihar and Bengal, played the same role *vis-a-vis* their conquerors as did the Hindu zamindars during the first and last stages of Muslim occupation of Bihar.

It is, therefore, clear that, on the eve of Lodi conquest of Bihar, the Bengal Sultans practically ruled over the whole of North Bihar up to Saran district and South Bihar up to Patna. The remaining portion from Ganga near Banaras up to Shahabad was the 'Refuge' of Ibrahim Sharqi in the days of his misfortune. Merely names and numbers of villages are not sufficient evidence in historical methodology.

After the flight of Ibrahim, Sikandar Lodi seems to have proceeded to North Bihar; on successful termination of which campaign, the Lodi Sultan, decided to test his powers with that of the Bengal kingdom in 1495 A. D. The subsequent story is supplied by Al Badaoni. *Shahzada* Daniel, who is reported to have built the fort of Munghyr was sent in command of the Bengal army by Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah. But Sikandar Lodi did not dare to clash with the powerful Bengal army and concluded a mutual non-aggression pact. It was at this time that a great famine occurred in Bihar. The Lodi emperor having made his eastern frontier safe, concentrated his attention on the helpless inhabitants of Saran, Champaran, etc., by plundering and confiscating the estates of Hindu zamindars and assigning them to his fellow Muslims. He gave Saran and Champaran as *jalkhet* to Hussain Khan Formuli. Some of the Persian historians designate him as 'Naib of Saran'. He was one of the sons of Shaikh Syed Formuli and had attached himself to the Lodi emperor. Two Persian annals: *Tarikh-i-Daudi* and *Tarikh-i-Shahi* have recorded the feats of this Afghan military adventurer, in inflicting arson and loot on the people of Saran, in the service Sikandar. Rizquillah Mushtaki tells us that he had taken many thousands of villages in Saran, from the Hindus, besides those comprising his *jaigir*; and killed an unknown 'Raja of Champaran', by which he obtained a great deal of booty and huge amount of gold.\*

\* Rizquillah supplies proof that Saran was not completely conquered neither by early Sultanates of Delhi nor by the Sharqi kings of Jaunpur.

Nemesis, however, soon overtook Hussain Formuli. The growth of his power and prestige, and amassing a fabulous wealth at the expense of the peace loving Hindus of North Bihar roused the just suspicion of his Turco-Afghan sovereign liege lord. According to Nizam-ud-din and *Feristha*, Hazi Saraung was sent at the head of a contingent of imperial troops in 1509 A. D., to Saran, to win over the Naib's men and if necessary to seize him. The gallant Hussain Formuli who had been a terror to the ill-equipped and badly led inhabitants of Champaran and Saran now fled in terror to the court of Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah for sanctuary. He probably encouraged the annexation of the territory up to Patna and Saran by the Bengal Sultan, as is suggested by Rizquilla. But Nasrat Shah, a son and successor of Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah, had to lead a fresh expedition to Tirhut.

On the death of Sikandar, matters, however, took a different turn. Hussain Formuli is reported to have returned to Ibrahim Lodi, son and successor of Sikandar. But Hussain realised his mistake when Miyan Makhan was placed in supreme command and Hussain was made a subordinate commander under him, in the expedition against Rana Sanga of Mewar with instructions to dispose of Formuli. Frustrated, Hussain seems to have vented his anger on unfortunate Makhan and left him in the lurch before Toda, to be easily defeated by Rana Sanga, who was not like the innocent zamindars of Saran. But he seems to have changed his attitude before all was lost, and made a treacherous attack on the victorious Rajput troops and succeeded due to the element of surprise. The gratified emperor offered him two alternative *jagirs*, either Saran or Chanderi. It was at Chanderi that he was killed.

In the meantime singular events overwhelmed Saran. The Sultans of Bengal did not remain passive observers when Ibrahim was striking death blows to the empire of the Lodis and eastern Afghans had decided to revolt to establish the Nuhani kingdom of Bihar under Darya Khan Nuhani. Nasir-ud-din Nasrat Shah (1519—1532 A. D.) had ascended the throne of Bengal. Unlike other Turco-Afghan rulers, instead of murdering his other brothers, he provided for them properly. Two brothers-in-law of his (sons-in-law of Ala-ud-din) named Makdum Alam and Ala-ud-din led the army to Tirhut or North Bihar, which they overran easily, because the Muslim colonists like Kabul Muhammad Khan were not strong enough to resist the Bengal army. The Bengal commanders reached up to Azamgarh, i.e., they conquered the whole of eastern Kosala. In 1526 A. D., at the historic battle field of Panipath, Jaharuddin Muhammad Babar, a Barlas Turk, descendant on father's side from Timur the lame and on mother's side from Chagatai, a son of Gengiz Khan, defeated and killed Ibrahim Lodi. Flying before the Mughal army, many pseudo Turco-Afghan war lords settled in Bihar, under the protection of the Bengal Sultan. Later they elected Muhammad Lodi, brother of Ibrahim Lodi as their emperor and decided to make a

fresh stand for the recovery of Delhi and Northern India. Nasrat Shah also sent Qutb Khan, a commander of his up to Bharaich, marching along the northern bank of Ganges, while Muhammad Lodi proceeded along the southern bank towards Chunar; when Babar had reached Jaunpur. Qutb Khan is reported to have fought many indecisive actions with the Mughal army and Babar. His ultimate fate is unknown. But Babar invaded South Bihar and the army of Muhammad Lodi melted away. Babar was now free to pay attention to Saran and neighbouring districts.

Nasrat Shah, thanks to Makhdum Alam and Ala-ud-din had extended his sway up to Azamgarh. The evidence is furnished by an inscription found at Sikandarpur on the Gogra. It records that on the 27th Rajab, 933 H. (28th April, 1527 A. D.) *sarlashkar* of 'Kharid', Ulugh Khan, erected a mosque there. It was this 'Kharid' area, that is the land on both banks of the Ganges in Balliya, Azamgarh and Saran, that brought about the first test of arms between Babar and the Bengal army. It was at Arrah, that Babar heard about the massing of the Bengali troops in 'Kharid'. They were supposed to have encamped near the junction of Ganga and the Ghagra. Babar regarded this as a hostile demonstration on the part of the King of Bengal, with whom he was at peace; and insisted on the withdrawal of the army and naval contingents from Bengal. The warning was disregarded, and Babar made simultaneous attack on the enemy with six different detachments, crossing the Ganges on the south from Shahabad and the Gogra on the north from Saran. The Afghans were completely discomfited by these pincer movements and dislodged from their position. The attack made by the Bengal fleet and army were also successfully repulsed. In his autobiography, fortunately for us, Babar has left a graphic account of the land and river battles, and specially the struggle on the Ghagra. "The Bengalees are famous for their skill in artillery", says Babar, "and on this occasion we had a good opportunity of observing them; but they do not direct their fire against particular points, but discharge at random". The day after the battle, Babar reached the village called 'Gundneh', in the 'Purgunnah' of Narhan to the north of the Saru" (Gogra), possibly the present village of Guthni near the river bank. Here he received Shah Muhammad Maruf, on whom he bestowed the country of Saran. After staying for some time in Saran Babar marched to a village called 'Choupareh' which evidently is the present city of 'Chapra'.

At Chapra, a tropical thunder-storm, which even now breaks over Saran in all its fury, overtook Babar, an inhabitant of the high lands of Samarkand, a dessicated territory. He has left an interesting account of his experiences which took place on 26th May. "The clouds of the rainy season broke, and there was suddenly such a tempest, and the wind rose so high, that most of the tents were blown down. I was writing in the middle of my pavilion, and so suddenly did the

storm come on, that I had no time to gather up my papers and the loose sheets that were written, before it blew down the pavilion, with the screen that surrounded it, on my head. The top of the pavilion was blown to pieces but God preserved me. I suffered no injury. The books and sheets of paper were drenched and wet, but were gathered again with much trouble, folded in woollen cloth, and placed under a bed, over which carpets were thrown. The storm abated in two *gharis*. We contrived to get up the *toshiak-khana* tent, lighted a candle with much difficulty, kindled a fire, and did not sleep till morning, being busily employed all the while in drying the leaves and papers”.

At Maner, Babar seems to have entered into a treaty with Nasrat Shah. In 1532 Nasrat Shah was murdered and was succeeded by his boy son Ala-ud-din Firoz Shah who was murdered by his uncle Ghyas-ud-din Mahmud Shah (1532—1538 A. D.). On hearing of his accession Makhdum Alam revolted in Hajipur. Qutb Khan *Sarlashkar* of Monghyr, was sent against him; who was defeated and killed in a battle by Sher Khan. Makhdum Alam then tried to conquer Bengal but died in action, leaving all his wealth in the custody of Sher Khan who was then Deputy Governor of Bihar for Jalal Khan Lohani. It was Sher Shah who for the first time united North Bihar with South Bihar and created a new province of Bihar. On the death of Sher Shah in 1545 A. D., Islam Shah (1543—1553 A. D.) appointed Muhammad Khan Sur as his Viceroy of North Bihar and Gaur. On the murder of Firoz Shah (1553 A. D.), the son and successor of Islam Shah, three days after his accession, Muhammad Khan Sur declared his independence and assumed the name of Shams-ud-din Muhammad Shah (1553—1555 A. D.), who was defeated and killed by Himu in the battle of Chapra-Mau in 1555 A. D. On his death the peers of Bengal retreated to Jhusi, near Allahabad and elected Khijir Khan, son of Shams-ud-din as an independent king of Bengal and North Bihar with the name of Ghyas-ud-din Bahadur Shah (1555—1560 A. D.). On his death he was succeeded by his brother Ghyas-ud-din Jalal Shah (1560—1565 A. D.).

By 1565 A. D. Taj Khan Karrani having conquered Bengal, Sulaiman Karrani became the undisputed master of Bengal, North and South Bihar. It was he who removed the capital from Gaur to Tanda near Rajmahal. In 1567 A. D., Sulaiman accepted Akbar as his sovereign. In 1572-73 A. D. he died and was succeeded by his son Bayazid, who was soon put to death. The murderer met with similar fate at the hands of Daud Khan another son of Sulaiman. Daud was the last independent Turco-Afghan Sultan of Bengal (1572—1576 A. D.). Before we start with the events leading to the conquest of Eastern India by Akbar the Great, it is necessary to sum up the achievements and failures of the Turco-Afghans in Bihar.

A seemingly endless procession of alien rulers, belonging to a fanatical creed, administered an area whose contributions in the past

had indeed been great. Their history is stained with arson, revolutions and internecine warfare. The condition of the masses is not known to us but can easily be imagined. At shorter intervals, we have strong rulers, who brought peace undoubtedly but were the worst tyrants. The people were smothered in the iron grip of Afghan feudalism; to whom the country side was parcelled out. Art and architecture were based upon the genius of the forcibly converted Indians. Gradually, with fresh infiltrations and absorptions, provincial types appear in place of makeshift arrangements, erected with the demolished heathen *disjecta* and utilised by uncomprehending masons. Two definite styles were revolved in Bihar and Bengal, the early Bengal style and the Sur architectural style.

The Turco-Afghans had carried the crescent to the furthest limits in the east, by beginning of the sixteenth century of the Christian era. But by that time they had also exhausted themselves in India. The luxury of living and wealth had played their influence on the sons of the hardy mountaineers. The dawn of sixteenth century found a position, which has been met with, in so many regions of the world in different centuries. Nature demanded infiltration of new blood or stagnation and degradation to the lowest level. India in the sixteenth century had become a vast crucible of redundant and mediocre dynasties and races lacking leadership, insight and humanity. Panipath was their Taraan.

#### MUGHAL PERIOD.

It was at this time that Raja Todarmall was despatched by Akbar (1574 A. D.) to conquer Bengal. A commander of Daud named Nizam was defeated at the confluence of Ganga and Gogra in the neighbourhood of the place where Babar had defeated Nasrat Shah. In this year, Jalal-ud-din Akbar passed Saran and Chapra by boat *en route* from Agra and encamped near Patna, founded by Sher Shah. On the 12th April 1575, Daud finally surrendered to the Mughals at Cuttack and Afghan sovereignty over Bengal ended.

It was in the reign of Akbar that the great land revenue settlement of the whole empire took place under the direction of Raja Todarmall. This settlement forms the basic foundation of our present system. It was called *Asl-i-Jama-i-Tumar* which superseded the assessment of Muzaffar Khan Turbati in the eleventh year of Akbar's reign. The third book of *Ain-i-Akbari* contains a comprehensive account of the same. He made Saran into a *Sarkar* containing 11 *mahals*, 10 villages and 2,29,052 *bighas* and 15 *bissas* of land yielding a revenue of 60,172,004½ *dams*.\* It supplied to the imperial army, 1,000 cavalry and 50,000 infantry. The various *mahals* were: Indar, Barari, Narhan, Pachlakh, Chanend, Chaubera, Juwanah, Degsi, Sipah, Pal, Bara, Godha, Kaliyanpur, Kashmir, Mangjhi (sic Manjhi), Mandhal and Maker.

---

\* Contemporary currency.



Akbar, however, had not yet seen the last of Bengal affairs. On the death of Khan Jahan on December, 1578, Muzaffar Khan Turbati was appointed as Governor of Bengal. In 1580, the great military revolt in Bengal started. The leaders were Wazir Jamal, Baba Khan Kakshal, Masum Khan Kabuli-Asi (the rebel), Masum Khan Farankhudi, etc. The causes of the rebellion were various. The Imperial Court had issued instructions to the officials in Bihar and Bengal to enforce the unpopular regulations concerning the branding of horses for Government service and to secure the rights of the crown by investigating into the titles of *jagir* lands and resume disproved holdings. The Imperial Finance Minister, Khwaja Shah Mansur though an expert in financial matters was very severe and lacked elasticity. All this resulted in producing violent discontent amongst the Muslim nobles, who were generally Afghans and recently established Mughal fеоffees in a country in which the Mughal rule had yet to be consolidated. Special cases of severity to individuals increased the tension, while an uncalled for interference by cutting down the local allowances by Mansur sanctioned by the emperor added fuel to the fire. Akbar had directed that the pay of men serving in Bengal should be increased by 100 per cent; and those serving in Bihar by 50 per cent. Mansur the 'Mughal Inchcape' ordered that those allowances should be cut down to 50 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively, and refund of excess payments were also demanded. In addition to all these, the orthodox Muslims of Bihar and Bengal were alarmed by the change in the religious policy of Akbar. The declaration of *Ilahi* was undoubtedly an alienation from Islam. Many of the officers in Bengal and Bihar looked to Muhammad Hakim as the head of the Indian Muslims. Early in 1580, Mulla Muhammad Yazdi, a theologian and Qazi of Jaunpur, issued a *Fatwa* that rebellion against the innovating emperor was lawful. In fact it was a declaration of *jihad* against the emperor. Masum Khan Kabuli who was in communication with Mirza Muhammad Hakim was a *jagirdar* of Patna and the ablest among the leaders.

Saran did not escape this turmoil. Shaham Khan Jalair, a Chaghtai, was stationed at Narhan. He was the son of Baba Beg, who had been a Governor of Humayun at Jaunpur. He took part in the battle of Chaunsa. While Humayun fled to Agra, loyal Baba Beg and others were commanded to bring in the Begam, etc. Baba Beg was killed in action while attempting to rescue the royal ladies. Shaham was raised to the peerage (*Amir*) by Akbar. He also held Ghazipur. Shaham heard that the revolt had broken out and Masum Khan Farankhudi had been driven back by the imperialists from Bahraich over the areas between Muhammadabad\* to Kaliyampur, a country which he plundered and intended to attack Jaunpur.

---

\*It is in Sitapur district of U. P. Possibly it is a scribe's error for Muhammadpur in Saran.

Shaham Khan united his troops with those of Pahar Khan from Ghazipur and Kasim from Jaldpur to attack him. Pahar Khan was a Baluch. They were so successful in their joint endeavours that Masum Farankhudi applied to Mirza Aziz Koka to intercede for him with the Emperor.

In April, 1580, Muzaffar Khan was killed at Tanda; Raja Todarmall was besieged in Monghyr for four months until he was relieved by the gradual dispersal of the rebel contingents and the back of the rebellion was broken. In order to conciliate the rebels, Shah Mansur was removed from the office of the Finance Minister. Shahbaz Khan Qambu inflicted a severe defeat on a section of the insurgents near Sultanpur-Bilhari, 50 miles from Ajodhya and by 1584 the rebellion had been suppressed. There is only one other instance of Akbar's reign found in the *Chronicles of Hathwa Raj* family. It states that one of the early members, Yuvaraja Sahi, then residing at Kalianpur, which is contiguous to Husepur, wrested from Raja Kabul Mohammad of Barharia, *pargana* of Sipah. This person was supposed to be an Afghan noble, a partisan of the king of Bengal (Daud Khan\*) who with other Afghan chiefs raised the standard of rebellion in Bihar during the reign of Akbar. He was killed in the battle and his fort was taken and destroyed by Yuvaraja Shahi who was allowed by the emperor to retain the *pargana* Sipah. Raja Kabul Mohammad is unknown to history though his descendants resided till eighteenth century at Barharia. It is quite possible that Raja Kabul Mohammad is no other than Masum Khan Kabuli—*Asi*.

After this for a long time we have no information about Saran till the seventeenth century. Peter Mundy, an English traveller, refers to a Raja of Kalianpur, who was at first well received by the then *Subahdar* of Bihar, Abdulla Khan Bahadur-Firoz Jung and honoured with a robe, at Patna; but was soon after imprisoned and his goods were plundered, whereupon his wife and friends rose in revolt and defeated Baba Beg, a revenue officer. Khawaja Anwar was sent to the aid of Baba Beg. Saran does not again come into prominence until the closing days of Mughal rule in Bihar.

#### MODERN PERIOD.

##### *British Period.*

The sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah in 1739 A. D. was a cataclysm. The effete Mughal Emperor was, however, allowed to continue. All legitimate government disappeared when the provinces taking advantage of the weakness of the centre became autonomous or paid only lip allegiance to the descendants of Babar and Akbar. Final *coup-de-grace* was given by the Marathas sweeping over the valleys of Sipra, Jumna and seven rivers to collect '*Chauth* and *Sardesh-mukhi*'. Of all the European Trading Company established in

---

\* Actually he was in league with Akbar's brother Mirza Muhammad Hakim.

India, the first to arrive were the Portuguese; who left a record of rapine and plunder. It was Nuno da Cunha (1529—1538 A. D.), Viceroy of Portuguese possessions in the South India, who introduced the Jesuit torturing machines for the glory of God, and monsters in human shapes in the smiling valleys of Bengal. "They were never formed into a regular governorships but remained in loose dependence on the Captain of Ceylon. Yet they became very prosperous, and their headquarters Hooghly, grew into a wealthy city. After the capture of Hooghly by Shahjahan in 1632, the bravest of the Portuguese in Bengal became outlaws and pirates, and in conjunction with the Arakanese and the Maghs preyed upon the sea ports and commerce of the Bengal\* coast." They went out in the same way that they had started.

### *European Factories.*

The Dutch were the first European power to challenge the monopoly of the Portuguese. During the sixteenth century the successors of the Hanseatic League; the ports of Bruges, Antwerp and Amsterdam became great emporia where eastern products transported by the Portuguese, were distributed throughout Europe. Private Companies were formed in various parts of Orange and Holland; but in 1602 A. D. the States General consolidated them into the 'United East India Company of the Netherlands'. Having swept the Portuguese from the Jaffnapattanam, in Ceylon in 1668 A. D., they reached India and destroyed all hopes of Portuguese supremacy in the East. And, by 1664 A. D., they had established factories at Patna. The Patna College building itself, is a Dutch Factory House. They consolidated themselves in the Indian archipelago, at a later date, thereby commencing a long chapter of European colonial tyranny. They, however, lost hold in India.

The commercial possibilities of Patna had attracted another European merchant company. The first English commercial mission came from Agra in 1620, consisting of two Englishmen Hughes and Parker. But the great expense of land carriage first to Agra, and then to Surat so enhanced the price of the articles that the project was given up. The second attempt was made in 1632, the agent being famous Peter Mundy. Mundy reported against the enterprise. It was not till 1650, that we find some English pioneers coming from Balasore and Hooghly. Shortly after this, the English must have established a small settlement at Patna, for in 1657, it is mentioned as a factory, under the control of the head agency at Hooghly.

The first English settlement was small enough, the merchants living and hiring houses in Patna, while their factories were built on the other side of the Ganges at Singia for saltpetre. Saltpetre was in great demand in Europe for the manufacture of gunpowder. The

---

\* *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, page 449.

English certainly did not put a blind eye to the values of other kinds of trade. Job Charnock was the chief of the factory from 1664 to 1680. Saran saltpetre was so good and so cheap that the contract for it was discontinued on the west coast in 1668, and at Masulipatam in 1670.

But by 1650, the Dutch had already been well established at Patna for sugar and saltpetre. Tavernier, who visited Patna with Bernier in 1666, and found it as a great commercial emporium states that "The Holland Company have a house there, by reason of their trade in saltpetre, which they refine at a great town called Chaupar (Chapra). Coming to Patna, we met the Hollanders in the street returning from Chaupar.....". In 1712 when Farrukhsiyar advanced his claims to the throne, he laid the city of Patna under contribution; a list of rich men was drawn up, at the head of which stood the English Agent and the Dutch Chief, Van Hoorn, whose properties were confiscated. The Dutch had to pay two lakhs and lost all their property in Bihar. During the *Matsya-nyaya* that followed the invasion of Nadir Shah, the French and English East India Companies were able to defend their colonial interests during the absence of a stable government. They successfully fished in troubled waters of Indian politics and gained a firm foothold in the Ganga delta. The very first two stooges of the British, Mirzaffar and Mirqasim revolted against their emasculation. In 1727 A. D. Fakhra-ud-daula was appointed the Governor of Bihar and held that post for about five years.

#### *Fakhra-ud-daula.*

It was he who in 1726, sent a force into Saran against Shaikh Abdullah who "was a man of consequence, who seemed to be the main hinge of all the government business in the province, for he had been for a length of time always employed by every Governor, either as his Deputy or as his General or Farmer of the revenue. He had connection with almost all the zamindars, was greatly respected by every one of them, and had conquered the goodwill of the troops, as well as every individual in the province, where he was universally respected. Fakhra-ud-daula incited by a sense of jealousy set up several Chicanes against him, and he made him so uneasy that the other thought it expedient to quit his house at Azimabad (Patna) and repaired to the other side of the Ganages, where he had built a mud fort about the town of Siwan. The Governor, not satisfied with this retreat, crossed the river after him in the said castle. The man reduced to extremities, applied to Sadat Khan, Governor of Oudh, his next neighbour, to whom he exposed his situation with the subject of the difference, and on his being sent for by him, he sallied out of the fort, forced bravely his passage through the Fakhra-ud-daula's camp and effected his retreat by valorous action in which he eluded Fakhra-ud-daula's inimical design and proved himself a soldier as well as a financier".

Fakhr-ud-daula was dismissed by *Samsam-ud-daulah Khan-i-Dauran* and Shuja-ud-din was appointed to hold charge of the united *subahs* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

*The Second British Invasion of Saran.*

On the death of Shuja-ud-daulah, on 13th March 1739, he was succeeded by his son, Sarfaraz, entitled Ala-ud-daulah Haiderjang; by overthrowing him at the famous battle of Giria on 10th April 1740, Alivardi ascended the throne of Bengal. Alivardi died on 10th April 1756 and was succeeded by Siraj-ud-daula. The subsequent history is well known. It was when Siraj-ud-daula had been defeated that the British made their second appearance in Saran in pursuit of Monsieur Law, who had espoused the cause of the defeated Nawab. This detachment crossed over from the south of the Ganges, the passage taking them three days, owing to difficulties in obtaining ferry boats; and reached Chapra on the 4th August, only to learn that Law had already reached Varanasi. Eyre Coote then held a council of war, at which it was resolved, that they should return to Patna, because, they had no boats by which to convey the troops by river, while the roads were impassable, the country being under water; and also because they were afraid that the Nawab of Oudh, Shuja-ud-daula, whose territory lay on the other side of the Ghogra, would regard an advance as a *casus belli*. Other strong objections against further advance were that sickness had broken out among the men, which the surgeon attributed to the soil being impregnated with saltpetre, and last, but not least that the *arrack* brought for the use of the soldiers was finished and they would get no fresh supply. The force accordingly returned to Patna, and thus ended the first expedition.

*Saran and Early British Rule.*

"Mir Qasim ascended the Masnad on October 20, 1760, amidst great pomp and eclat, and took great pains to impress on the wondering populace of Murshidabad that the deposition of Mirzaffar was right and just."\* But very soon he was disillusioned and clashed with his patrons. But the series of defeats which he suffered at the hands of the English and the fall of Patna sent him as a refugee to Oudh. In April, Shuja-ud-daulah invested the city of Patna. In the battle of 3rd May before Patna the visiting forces were repulsed. The contending armies then remained inactive till 30th May when Shuja-ud-daulah raised the siege and retreated towards Maner. On the 23rd February 1764, in the decisive battle of Buxar the British became undisputed masters of Bihar and Bengal. In May, however, a detachment had been despatched through Saran and Ghazipur to follow up the defeat at Patna. Major Champion was in command of this expeditionary force.

The next time that a British force appeared in the district, it met with a disaster. "This was in 1763, after Ellis, the Agent at

\* *Calcutta Review*, 1883, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 86-87.

Patna, thinking that war with Mir Qasim Ali was inevitable, had made an ill-advised attempt to seize the city. Some troops of the Nawab having come up, the English were driven back into the factory, and then, as their provisions began to run short and their position was untenable, they resolved to try and find shelter in the territory of the Nawab of Oudh. They accordingly crossed the Ganges during the night of the 29th June, and commenced their march towards Chapra. The rains, however, had now set in with great violence, the whole country was under water and the detachment was destitute of provisions and ill-supplied with ammunition. To add to their distress, they were harassed by the enemy, who speedily followed in pursuit; the inhabitants rose against them; and a strong force under the command of Somru crossed from Buxar to intercept their retreat. Notwithstanding these difficulties, they fought their way as far as Manjhi, where they were surrounded by the enemy under Somru and Ram Nidhi, Faujdar of Saran, whom the author of the *Sair-ul-Mutakharin* describes as an ungrateful Bengali. Here on the 1st July, Captain Carstairs drew out his shattered force to meet the attack; and though handicapped by want of guns and ammunition, offered a brief but ineffectual resistance. One battalion charged with fixed bayonets and compelled the enemy to give ground; but the Europeans, worn out with fatigue and want of nourishment, refused to follow them; and eventually the whole force laid down their arms and surrendered. Many of the sepoys took service with Mir Qasim Ali, and the remainder were released after being stripped of their equipment; some of the foreigners among the Europeans also entered the enemy's ranks; but with the exception of a few who managed to escape, all the English officers, soldiers and servants of the Company were carried off to Patna, where they were afterwards cruelly massacred."

"In 1766, Lord Clive himself came to Chapra, accompanied by General Carnac, after suppressing what is known as the White Mutiny. Here he was met by Shuja-ud-daula, Nawab Vazier of Oudh, by Munir-ud-daula, the minister of the Emperor Shah Alam, and by Raja Balwant Singh of Benares; and a conference was held at which a treaty was entered into by the contracting parties for their mutual defence against the Marathas. According to the *Sair-ul-Mutakharin*, after signing the conventions, "these noble personages exchanged entertainments and curious and costly presents, and the Vizier having been entertained with a mock battle among the European soldiers, who managed their guns and muskets with an amazing quickness and celerity, made them a present of Rs. 1,000 and returned to his capital."

#### *First Freedom Struggle in Saran.*

"The early days of British administration were troubled ones, owing to the rebellion of Maharaja Fateh Sahi of Husepur. Fateh

Sahi was descended from a line of semi-independent chiefs who had long exercised great power in Saran; and his immediate predecessor, Sardar Sahi, had demolished the fort of Majhauili and compelled its Raja to agree not to go about with flags and drums, the ensigns of Rajaship, until he had retaken them by force from the Rajas of Husepur. A kinsman of the powerful Balwant Singh, he chafed against the British rule, refused to pay revenue, resisted the troops sent against him, and was with much difficulty expelled from Husepur. Husepur, which appears to have been contiguous with the present subdivision of Siwan and Gopalganj was then farmed out to one Gobind Ram; but Fateh Sahi, who had retired into a large tract of forest, called Bagh Jogini, lying between Gorakhpur and Saran and adjoining the territory under the Vizier of Oudh, took every opportunity to make raids into the district, to plunder the villages, and to stop the collections of revenue. The unsettled state of the country, his easy access to the territories of an independent prince, where British troops were unable to pursue him, and the impenetrable forest which surrounded his retreat, the collusion of the agents of the Vizier of Oudh, and above all, the attachment of the people to their expelled Raja and their dislike of a Government farmer, all contributed to favour his designs; and he kept the country in a state of terror and the British authorities constantly on the alert. In 1772, Gobind Ram, the Government Farmer, was put to death in one of these raids, and the revenue collections having come to a standstill, the Collector of Sarkar Saran recommended that Fateh Sahi should be induced to come in on the promise of an allowance being made him by Government. This proposal was accepted; Gobind Ram's murder was forgiven on Fateh Sahi's solemnly denying any knowledge of the transaction; and Fateh Sahi came to Patna, and promised to remain quietly with his family at Husepur. His turbulent disposition did not allow him to remain in long quiet, however, and within two months he broke his promise and once more became a border free-booter.

"At this time Husepur was under the charge of one Mir Jamal, who was styled Superintendent of Government Revenue; and after being under the direct management of Government for a year, it was let out in farm to Basant Sahi, a cousin of Fateh Sahi, on the security of Raja Chait Singh of Benares. In 1775 both Basant Sahi and Mir Jamal were killed in a night attack by Fateh Sahi at Jadopur, a short distance from Husepur; and Fateh Sahi eluded the pursuit of two companies of sepoy under Lieutenant Erskine, which were in the neighbourhood, and escaped with his booty to his forest fastness. Basant Singh's head, it is said, was cut off and sent to his widow, who ascended a funeral pyre with it in her lap and became a *sati*. In dying, she pronounced a terrible curse on any of her descendants who should partake any food with Fateh Sahi or any of his race: to this day, it is said, the Maharajas of Hathwa have religiously refrained from touching food or drinking even a drop of water, while

travelling through that part of the Gorakhpur district which is the property of the Rajas of Tamkuhi, the descendants of Fateh Sahi.

"The Provincial Council at Patna were now in despair of capturing the rebel chief. He had under him a trained body of horsemen and matchlockmen; the number of his followers had been swollen by crowds of *fakirs* and banditti, and Lieutenant Erskine reported that there were so many entrances to his jungle retreat that it would take at least a battalion of sepoys to block them up and pursue him with any prospect of success. The Council, accordingly wrote to Warren Hastings, urging that as Fateh Sahi had taken shelter in the dominions of the Nawab of Oudh, the latter should be asked to assist the British troops. This was done, and a body of sepoys under Lieutenant Hardinge was sent in pursuit of Fateh Sahi. The expedition came to nothing, as Saiyid Muhammad, the Faujdar of Gorakhpur, was in collusion with Fateh Sahi, and refused to deliver an attack, though he was induced to march within 150 yards of the rebel's entrenchments. The troops were then marched back to their headquarters at Baragaon, or Line Bazar as it was also called from being a cantonment of company's troops; and a reward of Rs. 10,000 was offered to any one who would arrest him. All efforts to seize him ended, however, in equal failure, though troops scoured the countryside from time to time. The *outlaw* remained at large, laying the whole border land under contribution, and such was the terror he inspired that the local authorities were afraid to grant his lands to Mahesh Datt Sahi, his nephew and the son of Basant Sahi, lest he should suffer the fate of his father and the revenue administration become still more disorganised. After the death of Mahesh Datt Sahi, the estate was restored, in 1791, to his infant son, Chhattardhari Singh; and in 1808 Fateh Sahi, whose powers for mischief were gradually curtailed as a more settled administration was introduced, closed his turbulent career by becoming a *fakir*.\*"

Fateh Sahi was Kunwar Singh of Saran, and in fact he was probably the first to raise the standard of revolt when whole of India had yet to realise the humiliating experiences of a foreign rule. Even in nineteenth century English Society of India, admirers were not lacking. Thus one gentleman writing under the pen name 'G. P. S.' in *Calcutta Review* summed up Fateh Sahi in the following way: Actually he was Maharaja Fateh Sahi of Husepur. "Fateh Sahi's lot was cast in troubled times. The Muhamadan power was fast declining, and the English Government was not yet firmly established in the land. Shah Alam the last of the Moghuls, the imperial wanderer, had, by his repeated invasions done more to unsettle the affairs of Behar, than to gain any advantage for himself. He had been interested to these attempts, by some of the chief zamindars, amongst others Balwant Sinha of Benares, a relation and friend of Fateh Sahi's family. Mir Qasim's attempt at uprooting the British

\* The Aristocracy of Behar, *Calcutta Review*, 1883, Vol. LXXVI, pp. 80 ff.



power had, like other attempts of the kind, signally failed, and Colonel Clive had only thus obtained for his master, the East India Company, the Dewany of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The administration of force in Bihar was vested in a joint Council of Europeans and natives, and when, at the end of the year 1767, the Revenue Collector of Sircar Sarun demanded rents on behalf of the Company, Fateh Sahi not only refused to pay them, but gave fight to the Company's troops who were sent against him in consequence, and it was not without much difficulty that these troops succeeded in expelling him from Hosiarpur (*sic.* Husepur). The revenue of the district Hosiarpur was then farmed out to one Govindram; but Fateh Sahi, who had retired into the jungles bordering on the then independent dominions of the Vizier of Oudh and the province of Bihar, watched every opportunity of making raids into the district to plunder the villages and stop the collections of revenue."\*

To appreciate the 'blood, toil and tears' of the eighteenth century, we have to analyse the causes. During the century that followed Plassey, the people of Bihar went on paying indemnity for the great betrayal of the country by Mirzaffar, Rajballabh and Umichand. The people suddenly enslaved, felt discontented when they realised that their social, political and economic life was vitally affected.

The greatest evil that emerged out of Plassey was not merely economic exploitation but emasculation of the country. To be Nawab, the candidates had paid heavily to the East India Company and their senior officials. The Zulahas (weavers) of the famous Dacca Muslin were maimed to serve the interests of British trade. The Company's officers like Clive, Ammyatt, Barwell, Vansittart, undersold the sons of the soil and amassed fabulous fortunes.† Eighteenth century England dubbed them Nabobs. The oppressive agrarian policy ruined both the peasants as well as the landlords. The inexorable auction, laws and farming unsettled many hereditary zamindars; but more than that, new farmers like Govindram of Saran or Ganga Govinda Sinha of Calcutta were hated for their tyranny.

The social and religious causes were two other factors which brought untold miseries to the people of Bengal and Bihar. The superior attitude of the Britishers irritated the population. Along with them, came a new class of semi-educated men, as petty clerks,

---

\* *Calcutta Review*, 1883, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 86—87.

† "Such a scene of anarchy, confusion, bribery and corruptions and extortion was never seen or heard of in any country but Bengal nor have such and so many fortunes been acquired in so unjust and rapacious a manner. The three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa producing a clear revenue of £ 30,00,000 sterling have been under the absolute management of the Company's servants, ever since Mirjafar's restoration to the Subhedarship; and they have, both civil and military, exacted and levied contributions from every man of power and consequence from the Nawab down to the lowest zamindars." (Lord Clive)

amils, surveyors, etc., whose avarice and currupt methods reacted on the new rule. The men who belonged to the old Mughal aristocracy, Hindu or Muslim, were not respected. The new people came from the lower middle class without the background of experience and tradition and made themselves practically the rulers of the country, in the role of the middle men between the white masters and the ruled. With the result, that resistance against the British, stiffened, due to political, economic, personal reasons, misrule and maladministration. Maharaja Fateh Sahi was not a solitary instance. Throughout India, an undercurrent of resistance was noticeable. Chait Singh of Varanasi, Wazier Ali of Lucknow, Rajas of Malabar, a series of insurrections in Assam, the *Killahdars* of Bundelkhand and Vijaya Singh of Rohilkhand are a few other instances.

*Saran under Company's rule.*

Immediately after the annexation, the district continued to be known as *Sarkar Saran* and included the present district of Champaran. Chapra town was the headquarters of the area. Quite early it became evident that the location of the Courts at Saran was not merely inconvenient for the people of Champaran; but constituted a denial of the fundamentals of justice. One good point however was the separation of the Judgeship and Magistracy at a very early date. It was at Saran in 1836 that the first Indian Deputy Collector was appointed. His name was Agah Ibrahim Ali Khan. In 1844, Edward Thornton published two Gazetteers of the territories under the Government of the East India Company where Saran figured. Slavery was practised in the eighteenth century at Saran. The European settlers mostly had some slaves as their servants. Most of the public works were executed by the British administrators with the help of the convicts in jail. This method was also in vogue in Patna as noticed by H. Beveridge. Indigo troubles were very prominent early in the nineteenth century and in some of the letters preserved in Saran Collectorate, mention has been made that the cultivators strongly resented the plantations of indigo though the Revenue Board as early as 22nd November 1793 had informed the Collector of Sarkar Saran, that Governor-General was opposed to Europeans holding lands for cultivation of indigo.† *Sati* was prevalent in Saran. Regulation XVII of 1829 abolishing the practice, was in the very early stages more violated than respected. River dacoities were not an uncommon feature and Guard Boats were established on the river Ganges between Hajipur and the western extremity of Sarkar Saran. The boats were of 14 oars each and were procured from Tripurah. Saran was rather notorious for *thuggis*. There was no particular caste or community that was addicted to this form of crime. It was more or less followed as a profession by men of various status and castes. The *modus operandi* was to follow the travellers and some how to gain their confidence. Occasionally the cart-men were in league with the *thugs*. The

so-called 'Sannyasi rebels' made famous in Bankim Chandra's *Anandamatha* did not fail Saran. In 1767, a body of *Sannyasis*, 5,000 strong entered Sarkar Saran. The *Faujdar* sent two Companies of sepoys under a sergeant who overtook them. The *Sannyasis* made about-turn and allowed the troops to waste their ammunitions, then they fell on them, killed or wounded about 80 and put them to flight.\*

Saran saw the beginning of Roman Catholic Mission in Bihar in 1740. Muqurrah Khan or Sheikh Hussain of Panipath and Tarrana-Saharanpur was, like his father, a noted physician; and held the rank of five thousand. He was appointed Governor of Bihar in 1620 A. D. According to some he had been converted to the Catholic faith when he was Mughal Ambassador at Goa. The first Catholic priest at Patna came in his time. The first mission however was established at Bettiah in 1847.\*

#### *Movement of 1857—1859.*

Since its outbreak in 1857 the historic Movement of 1857 (widely known as Sepoy Mutiny) has been a favourite subject of discussion. It is beyond the range of a District Gazetteer to discuss at length the causes which led to the outbreak of the Movement of 1857. Briefly, the rapid expansion of the British dominion in India, attended as it was by changes in the administrative system and modes of existence to which the people had been accustomed through long ages, disturbed the placid currents of Indian life and produced commotions in different parts of the country. The pre-1857 days in India witnessed social and economic changes which were fraught with tremendous consequences for the future of the country. The socio-economic reforms of the pre-mutiny period evoked protests from the affected class of the Indian population. The previous historians both at home and abroad had studied the Movement mainly in its political aspect and from the point of view of the military exploits and operations of the British Generals who conducted their campaigns against the rebels. Mr. Hara Prasad Chattopadhyaya had observed in his book "The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857", "But no Kaye or Malleon has reviewed the mutiny against a proper social background or has made a careful study of its socio-economic implications".† Mr. A. P. Middleton in the last *District Gazetteer of Saran*, published in 1930, had quoted *verbatim* the paragraphs on this subject from the *District Gazetteer of Saran*, published in 1907. It is now possible to review the background and the development in the light of latest researches on the documents of the period preserved in the District Record Room and the National Archives, New Delhi. Obviously these source materials were not looked into before.

---

\* Sarkar Saran—P. C. Roy Choudhury.

† There have, however, been some recent researches on the Socio-economic implication (P. C. R. C.).

Some of the cross currents that affected the life of the people of the district and practically throughout Bihar have to be indicated. Saran district has been noted for the sturdy and stalwart Bhojpuris who along with their counterpart in the neighbouring district of Shahabad have always been noted for their martial spirit and physical endurance. The army and police personnel were largely drawn from them. But they were destined to remain at the lowest rung of the ladder. There was a sort of step-motherly treatment to them in spite of the important role they filled in. The German Evangelical Lutheran Mission was established in Saran in 1840. The activities of the missionaries led to misgivings in some quarters. There was a sort of suspicion that the missionaries drew their inspiration from the European administrators. The suspicion of the people received further confirmation in the new Regulation which introduced common messing system in jails. The book '*Sarkar Saran*', published from the Gazetteers' Revision Section, Bihar (1956), mentions that "The introduction of messing system in Saran and Shahabad jails had been preceded by a hunger-strike by the prisoners. Six hundred of the Saran and Shahabad prisoners had refused their food for two days in order to show their dissatisfaction against the messing system about to be introduced. A letter from the Sessions Judge of Saran, dated Chapra, the 28th June 1845, in the correspondence volume for 1845 refers to the hunger-strike. It further refers to the difficulty in finding a cook as a cook selected by one set of Brahmins might be objected to by another set of the same".

There was also a strong under-current of disaffection towards the constituted authority in Bihar due to a firm idea that the administrators and the European indigo planters were hand-in-glove with each other and that the common man had no one to look to for the inequity he suffered in the hands of the planters. From one end of North Bihar to the other there were indigo concerns (*kothis*) within 10 or 15 miles of each other and the tenantry had to grow indigo whether they wanted it or not and even when the cultivation of indigo was no economic gain to them. The original set of planters had been substituted at various places by their employees who were least sympathetic to the cultivators. The cultivators had also to part with the indigo at a rock bottom price while the planters and the middlemen made themselves rich at their cost. The indigo *ryots* had also to pay a number of illegal taxes (*abwabs*) and *abwabs* had to be paid first before the rent could be taken. The indigo planters had their powerful Planters' Association and the Bihar Light Horse which was a sort of defence force manned by the Europeans and Anglo-Indians of the district. The European administrators freely joined the Bihar Light Horse in their frequent camps. The meetings of the Indigo Planters' Association were usually attended by the European administrators. The Planters' Clubs or Gymkhanas were also meant for the few European administrators. These circumstances naturally

led to have an impression that the planters and the administrators were different phases of one and the same institution.

It may, however, be mentioned that there were exceptions among the administrators. One such exception was William Tayler who was the Commissioner of Patna Division in 1857. William Tayler has been correctly described as a strong man who stood no nonsense and shirked no responsibility.\*

The news of the outbreak at Meerut had caused widespread disquiet in Bihar. The report from Banaras caused a panic and many Europeans left their posts in the countryside to seek shelter at Patna. From the narrative (papers no. 5 relative to the Mutiny in the East Indies, presented to both Houses of the Parliament by command of Her Majesty, 1857, printed by Harrison and Sons, London, no. 1, Fort William, August 22, 1857, no. 84 Public), it appears that a concerted action was in progress in Bihar to overthrow the alien government. The report mentions that "during the early part of June considerable excitement prevailed throughout Bihar in consequence of the general spread of a belief, inculcated by designing persons that the Government contemplated active interference with the religion of the people. There was a general tranquillity, but it was believed that the safety of the province depended on the fidelity of the troops at Dinapur. It was conceded that the Muhammadans were thoroughly disaffected. Precautionary measures had been adopted by adding to the police force, by watching and regulating the *ghats*, by guarding the frontiers, by the removal of the treasure at Arrah and Chupra to Patna, by the formation of a volunteer guards at Patna. The Rajas of Bettiah and Hathwa had addressed letters expressing of loyalty and devotion to government. Occurrences at Gorakhpur and Azamgarh adjoining Chupra and Arrah had led to a certain amount of panic and most of the European residents connected with the railway had taken refuge in Dinapur. There was considerable apprehension at Gaya owing to the presence of bad characters in that city".

About the attitude of the zamindars Richardson, Magistrate of Muzaffarpore wrote to the Secretary to Government of Bengal on June 29, 1857, thus:

"The zamindars of the district seem generally well-wishers of Government—no doubt a few have talked seditiously. I have one at present on trial but by far the larger portion is well affected." The records, however, show that though zamindars, traders and bankers of Tirhoot generally went against the sepoys it would be far from truth to hold that they did not have any popular support. They were joined by many of the civil population in the different *pergunnahs* of the district. The Maharajah of Bettiah remained loyal to Government and was awarded a title. Even before the actual

\* *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, page 245—S. N. Sen.

outbreak of the mutiny, he wrote to Tayler expressing his loyalty and promising to remain loyal to Government. "I observe", he wrote to Tayler on June 9, 1857, "that some evil-minded men have studiously given out unfavourable reports that Government have a design to convert their subjects to Christianity, which has produced a panic among the people who have actually begun to revolt. I deny their assertions and most truthfully declare that Government have no such designs. The stories are mere inventions of bad men to serve their ends. Now nearly a hundred years the British are the paramount rulers of India; they have in no instance interfered with religion of our forefathers; on the contrary, they have allowed us a free exercise of our religious functions and they have further enacted a law that whoever scoffs at one's religion or molests one in religious duties should be severely punished". The Maharajah wrote further in this connection thus: "I have proclaimed to my people through my several *tehsildars* the purport of the first paragraph of this letter and have assured them that they must soften their anxiety and fears, as Government has already taken prompt steps to punish the disturbers of the public peace by strong hands and that the disturbance created by the insurgents will soon be settled". The Maharajah was true to his words. He remained a firm supporter of Government during the upheaval of 1857-1859.

The trends of events in Patna being the higher seat of administration had their effect on Saran. The attitude of Tayler towards the fanatical Wahabis of Patna also precipitated the revolt of 1857 in Bihar. The Wahabis of Patna City were engaged in a general conspiracy against the Government, and had their agents in various parts of the country. On the 12th June, a Najib was found spreading sedition among Rattray's Sikhs. He was found guilty, and hanged. The Machiavellian move of the Commissioner of Patna in fraudulently detaining three prominent Wahabi leaders of Patna produced widespread commotion throughout the division comprising the districts of Patna, Gaya, Shahabad, Saran and Tirhut. Tayler put the arrested Wahabis in a bungalow under his personal surveillance. This unprecedented action had a great reaction especially among the Muslim population. The Wahabi movement in Bihar is a definite landmark prior to the outburst of the insurrection of 1857. There could be no doubt that this movement had been preparing the ground for some years along with other forces for the flare up. Patna being the nerve-centre of this movement, parts of Bihar had been well saturated with the idea that the British hold was irksome and has to be removed. It is true that Wahabism was more confined to the Muslims but a dynamic ideology has an osmosis process.

Mutiny in the north-western province had its early repercussion on Bihar. At Rohini, a village in the Deoghur subdivision in the district of Santhal Parganas, three men of the 5th Irregular Cavalry rose in revolt on the evening of June 12, 1857. They killed the

Commander of the Regiment, Major Macdonald, Sir Norman Leslie, Adjutant of the Commander and Dr. Grant, Assistant Surgeon, attached to the Cavalry Regiment, managed to effect their escape with injuries only. The mutineers were seized, tried and hanged to death in the presence of the entire regiments. The failure of the rising at Rohini and the execution of the three mutineers as mentioned above did by no means arrest the progress of revolt in Bihar. The situation in the West Bihar Division with Patna as its headquarters was gradually growing alarming. Agents of conspiracy were appointed by the Wahabis and regularly paid; subscriptions to finance mutinous preparations were raised, and collections were distributed among the agents of conspiracy. In a letter, dated June 19, 1857, William Tayler wrote to Frederick Halliday on the occasion of Patna thus: "All is seemingly quiet in Patna but the quiet itself is suspicious. There is a general feeling that something is brewing and I have secret information of nightly meetings, collection of arms, etc., among the Wahabis and some others. A little more, and I shall act."\* It was this suspicion which led Tayler to arrest the three ring leaders and issued orders that the city of Patna should be disarmed and that the citizens were to keep indoors after 9 o'clock in the night. On July 3 some 200 men with flags and slogans and armed with guns assembled in the house of a Mohammadan bookseller, named Peer Ali Khan and thence proceeded towards and attacked the Roman Catholic Church in the heart of the city. This was followed by the murder of Dr. R. Lyell, the Principal, Assistant to the Opium Agent of Bihar. Tayler had no doubt in his mind about the aggressive designs of the Wahabis of Patna so far as he could study them. Consequent of the failure of the attempted rising of July 3 the ring leaders sought to be arrested, and the city underwent a thorough search. Tayler's policy of constant arrests and continued hangings temporarily suppressed the mutinous spirit. But it was like a pyrrhic victory which further gave much strain and stress to the Government. The bold action of Tayler was, of course, warmly supported by the mercantile community of Calcutta, the commercial interests of which demanded a peaceful state of things in Patna, Dinapore and Tirhut. The interests of the mercantile community of Calcutta were bound up with the indigo plantation in Tirhut.

But in spite of Tayler's precautions the sepoy of Dinapore mutinied on the 25th July and soon revolts broke out in Gaya, Shahabad, Champaran, Saran and Tirhut. The subsequent development in Saran has been described in the last *District Gazetteer of Saran* as follows :—

"The only other notable event in the history of Saran was the Mutiny of 1857. All was quiet till the end of July, largely owing to the bold policy pursued by Major Holmes, the Commandant of

\* As quoted in Prof. H. P. Chattopadhyay's *The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857*.

the 12th Irregular Cavalry at Sugauli, who firmly repressed disaffection, and on his own authority, declared martial law. This order was cancelled as soon as Government learnt of it, but in the meantime it had been effectual in preventing any outbreak. On the 25th July the regiment mutinied, savagely murdered Major Holmes and their officers, and then marched off to Azamgarh, attacking on the way the houses of Messrs. Lynch and McDonnell, the Deputy Magistrate and Sub-Deputy Opium Agent at Siwan, who narrowly escaped with their lives. On hearing of this outbreak, the European residents, being unable to defend the station, left Chupra on the 28th July, and took refuge at Dinapore, but they returned on the 12th August to find everything in a tranquil and orderly state, with the jail and treasury untouched, and the detachment of Najibs still loyal, order having been preserved during their absence by a Muhammadan gentleman named Kazi Ramzan Ali. Outside the headquarters station, however, the country was seriously threatened by the occupation of Gorakhpur by the rebels under Muhammad Hussain, who had declared himself its *Chakladar* under the king of Oudh; and in October one party of 500 men entered the district and plundered two factories, one near Darauli belonging to a native, Babu Ram, and the other at Gangua to Mr. Mcleod, whose assistants had barely time to escape. After this special measures had to be taken for the defence of the district; and a Gurkha regiment together with Captain Sotheby's Naval Brigade being stationed at Siwan, the rebels fell back, and the Sonepur fair was held as usual and passed off quietly.

Subsequently, in December, 1857, another small body of rebels crossed from Gorakhpur and attacked the outpost of Guthni, which was held by a detachment of 55 Sikhs, who thinking a large force were on them, fled without offering any resistance. Re-inforcements from the Gurkhas and Naval Brigade were promptly sent up, but before their arrival the enemy had escaped across the river after burning the Sikh lines. Towards the close of this month Jang Bahadur arrived, with a Nepalese army, and on the 26th December Colonel Rowcroft, with a force of less than 1,000 men, defeated a force of not less than 6,000 or 7,000 rebels at Sohanpur on the Gorakhpur frontier; while a successful fight took place on the same day at Sahibganj, 5 miles from Pipra, between two regiments sent out by Jang Bahadur and a party of rebels. These successes had the effect of clearing the districts of the Patna Division north of the Ganga, and after this, though Chapra was several times threatened, there was no real danger for some time. A force of sailors and Sikhs was posted at Chapra; a levy of 200 men was raised and organised by Mr. McDonnell, the Sub-Deputy Opium Agent at Siwan, while two armed steamers, the Jumna and Meghna cruised in the Ganges and Gogra.

In April, 1858, there were grave apprehensions that Kuar Singh might advance on this district; and once, when an incursion seemed imminent, the ladies, and treasure amounting to 6 lakhs, were



sent to Dinapore, while the residents set to work to fortify the house of the Raja of Hathwa. These fears were not unnatural as it was estimated that as many as 10,000 sepoys were natives of Saran. It was well known that the treasury of the Raja contained property to the value of a crore of rupees, which might well tempt them to make a dash into Saran; 'nor', remarked the Lieutenant-Governor, "should we, in the event of any attempts on the place, have been able to render the slightest assistance" to this loyal family, which had stood firmly by us during the whole disturbances". No attack, however, was made by any large force; though the district was infested by scattered bands of mutineers. One such party delivered a night attack on Captain Miles's outpost at Itwa, but were repulsed by the Siwan levy and a few Sikhs; and a few days later Captain Miles retaliated by attacking them at a place called Laheji and drove them in rout before him. After this, the rebels not finding the support and sympathy they expected, left the district in peace.

This sketch of the course of the Mutiny in Saran would be incomplete without a mention of the District Magistrate, Mr. Fraser McDonell. When the European residents left Chapra at the end of July, 1857, and took refuge in Dinapore, Mr. McDonell seized the opportunity to volunteer for the expedition which started under the command of Captain Dunbar for the relief of Arrah. As is well known, this expedition ended in a disastrous failure. The troops fell into an ambuscade; the survivors fell back in utter rout; and it was at this juncture that Mr. McDonell distinguished himself. To quote from the account given in Sir John Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War*:—"Disastrous as was the retreat, it was not all disgraceful. Individual acts of heroism saved the honour of the British character. Two volunteers, Mr. McDonell and Mr. Ross Mangles of the Civil Service, besides doing excellent service on the march, made themselves remarkable by acts of conspicuous daring. The former, though wounded, was one of the last men to enter the boats. The insurgents had taken the oars of his boat and had lashed the rudder, so that though the wind was favourable for retreat, the current carried the boat back to the river bank. Thirty-five soldiers were in the boat, sheltered from fire by the usual thatch covering; but while the rudder was fixed, the inmates remained at the mercy of the enemy. At this crisis, Mr. McDonell stepped out from the shelter, climbed on to the roof of the boat, perched himself on the rudder and cut the lashings amidst a storm of bullets from the contiguous bank. Strangely enough, not a ball struck him; the rudder was loosened, the boat answered to the helm, and by Mr. McDonell's brilliant act, the crew were saved from certain destruction".

Mr. McDonell received the Victoria Cross as a reward for his gallantry; and subsequently was specially selected to accompany the force under Brigadier Douglas and General Lugard in Azamgarh. During his absence Mr. Richardson, the Collector, performed the

duties of District Magistrate, and showed himself very active and successful in the pursuit and apprehension of mutineers. Another officer of the same name who distinguished himself was Mr. E. McDonell, the Sub-Deputy Opium Agent, who raised and organised the Siwan levy; and last, but not least, among those who did loyal service was the Raja of Hathwa who in the words of the Lieutenant-Governor, "came forward with offers of assistance, placed men and elephants at the disposal of Government, and gave praiseworthy aid and support to Government during the whole progress of the rebellion".\*

There are a number of important documents in the Old Correspondence Volumes preserved in the Saran Record Room. Their digest has been given in '*Sarkar Saran*' published from Gazetteers' Revision Section (1956) and is a good source material for developments of the movement.

Saran district, because of the heavy river traffic, proximity to the eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh and her sturdy people had its importance in 1857. Buxar which had an important fort was easily vulnerable from the river. The river front, needed careful watch in troubles sometimes. On the 20th November 1857 in his letter no. 1663, the Commissioner of Patna asked the Magistrate of Saran not to allow any boat containing either grain or war-like stores to pass to Gorakhpur. At one stage as the old correspondence shows the Commissioner of Patna Division was apprehensive of an attack of four thousand armed men with guns raiding Chuprah from Gorakhpur side. The Secretary to the Government of Bengal could not promise any particular help and the Commissioner was asked to utilise all his resources. The Commissioner was authorised to utilise the existing army and to deploy the men from other places and to utilise the Naval Brigade under Captain Sotheby. The Commissioner was further asked to utilise the steam ferry boats. During the height of the troubles British gun-boats used to go up and down the river by Chuprah giving protection and in checking insurrection.

#### *Gun-boats.*

The Commissioner of Patna informed the Magistrate of Chuprah on 14th August 1857 that a gun-boat armed with a twelve pounder Howitzer and eleven Europeans with enfield rifles were sent to Revelganj. The idea was to watch the mouth of the Gogra for interception of any communication between Faizabad for arms and ammunition without causing any interruption to trade as far as possible.

\*From letter no. 863, dated the 24th. August 1857, it appears that Martial Law had been proclaimed in Saran district and the Commissioner in several letters had elaborated on the procedure for trials under Martial Law.

---

\* *District Gazetteer of Saran* (1930).

*Rana Jung Bahadur of Nepal.*

There are a number of letters in the Old Correspondence Volumes of 1857-58 which indicate the great help from Rana Jung Bahadur of Nepal. The Collector was warned to be extremely cautious about *Rashad* (Supply) and arrangements at the *ghats* for the crossing of the troops from Nepal were perfect. There is some reference to a Mukhtear at Bettiah who gave some trouble to the arrangements and there was a talk of prosecuting the Mukhtear. The idea of prosecution was, however, dropped at the instance of Rana Jung Bahadur.

*The Loyalists.*

In the National Archives in New Delhi there is a list of Indians who rendered loyal services to the British Government and were rewarded (Foreign Miscellaneous Records no. 383). The list mentions the following persons of Saran district :—

- " (25) Shah Khyrat Hossain.
- (26) Shah Ahmad Hossain.
- (27) Ramzan Ali Gazee—When station was abandoned by the officials, he took the management of offices into his own hand, held *Cutchery* regularly and on the return of the Civil Officers handed over the station and district in good order.
- (28) Moharajah Rajeendar Kishen Bahadur of Bettiah and
- (29) Moharajah Chutter Dharee Singh of Hutwa—Both displayed conspicuous loyalties and opposed the rebel. Both the Rajas supplied *Sowars* and foot-men to prevent the Mutineers from crossing the Gogra and entering Champaran and Saran from Gorakhpur. Supplied men and provisions.
- (30) Mohomed Wajid, Munsif of Saran.
- (31) Darogah of Tajpoore, Saran.
- (32) Enayat Hossem, Darogah of Hossapore (Saran).
- (33) Luchman Sahah, Kamdar of Barrowly (Saran)."

The narrative of 1857—1859 in Saran will be incomplete without a reference to Kunwar Singh, the stormy petrel of Bihar who played a unique role in the revolt of 1857—1859. Kunwar Singh got wide support from the people of Saran. It is said that he hatched a plan to overthrow the British Government along with the leading personalities of Bihar in the Sonapur fair preceding the revolt of 1857. While at the zenith of his power and after a series of exploits in Eastern Uttar Pradesh Kunwar Singh had crossed the Ganga on the 21st April 1858 at Sheopur *Ghat*. This crossing at Sheopur *Ghat* was a memorable event. From the letter of McDonell, Magistrate of Saran, to the Commissioner of the Patna Division on July 18, 1858, it is clear when Kunwar Singh and his army appeared there was only one small boat at the *Ghat*. A few of his men crossed

over with this boat and within a short time with the assistance of a number of the inhabitants of the village on the river a number of *ghat* boats that had been sunk on the Shahabad side of the stream were floated. Kunwar Singh's men crossed over by these boats and also waylaid a few covered commercial boats which were plying with grains and sugar. The bags of grains and sugar were thrown on the bank and the boats were utilised. The Magistrate remarks that Kunwar Singh could get so many boats at a very short notice because he had numerous friends on the either side bank willing to render him assistance.

The old correspondence preserved in Saran Record Room makes it clear that a good number of the soldiers who had rebelled came from Saran district. There was a large number of military pensioners in Saran district and the Magistrate had stopped payment of the pension in the case of many of the military pensioners. He insisted on their personal presence and there used to be a frequent watch on them as they were treated with a good deal of suspicion. This was another reason why there was a great resentment against the administration.

Kunwar Singh's death on the 26th April 1858 after the eventful victory of 23rd April 1858 proved more of a menace to British authorities in Saran. Deprived of his leadership his men became indisciplined, broke into batches of 100 or 200 persons and went on looting, burning and plundering the countryside. They reduced the eastern Gazeepur district into complete anarchy and the old correspondence for 1858 in the District Record Room amply bears out the anxiety of the Magistrate to keep Saran unmolested. The letters from June, 1858, onwards show that the Magistrate was constantly appealing to Dinapore for the deployment of a few Companies of British and Sikh troops. Kunwar Singh's men, it appears from the correspondence, made a particular target on the police thanas. Several Sub-Inspectors of Police including the Sub-Inspector of Darauli were waylaid and killed.

In a letter, dated the 14th June 1858, the Magistrate of Saran informed the Commissioner of Patna that the police force would be absolutely inadequate to stop the rebels from crossing the river. He requested the Commissioner to call upon the Brigadier commanding Dinapore Division to send one Company of H. M. 35th to occupy Chapra for the time being. He further pointed out that not much hope could be fixed on the Sewan Levy as most of them were partially trained. There was a Naval Brigade cruising on the rivers near Chapra but this was also a very small military aid.

In a letter, dated June 15, 1858, the Magistrate informed the Commissioner that a small band of rebels armed with muskets and bayonets were creating havoc in the vicinity of Raghunathpur Police Chowkee and trying to kill the Police. He did not have much

reliance on the zamindars and had offered a reward of Rs. 500 for the apprehension of the rebels or for bringing in their bodies.

The Magistrate had called upon the Rajas of Hatwa, Bettiah and other zamindars to assist in guarding the *ghats* both public and private. Letter no. 37, dated the 18th February 1858, from the Magistrate of Saran, to the Commissioner of Patna makes it clear that although the strength of the *thanas* had been increased and he had severely warned the zamindars and called upon them to give help; he was not sanguine in case there was an attack. He had stopped the prisoners from working on the roads. By this time Gazeepur and Gorakhpur had been in a state of deplorable confusion.

The mutineers were extremely vindictive. On the 5th October 1858 the Magistrate reported to the Commissioner that one Mahadev Lall Barkandaz was waylaid and his nose was cut into two and his right hand was chopped off because he was found carrying an important message from the Magistrate. The rebels had completely upset the river traffic and plundered several boats containing coal, grains, or other merchandise.

There are records in the National Archives (Foreign Despatch, Secret Committee, 24th November 1876) which show that at a particular stage it was apprehended that Saran will completely slip out of the hands of the British. The Commissioner, Patna Division, had suggested a request to Nepal Darbar to send 2,000 troops to hold Saran and Champaran. Before the request had been actually conveyed to Nepal Darbar the Resident at Nepal had anticipated the situation and deputed 1,000 Goorkha troops. The Goorkhas were deployed under different Regiments and fully utilised to hold Saran, Champaran, Gorakhpur and other districts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

#### *Indo-Nepal Relationship.*

As the district of Saran comprised the present district of Champaran till 1866 and Champaran was closely connected with the independent territory of Nepal at the border it is necessary to briefly indicate a few facts. The Resident of Nepal was in close touch with the Magistrate of Saran because of his contact with the areas in Champaran. The title of Maharaja Bahadur was conferred on Nawal Kishore Singh of Bettiah in 1844. The title was conferred in a public Darbar by the Commissioner of Patna on the 15th November 1844. It appears that the Resident at Nepal had some hands in getting the title conferred. The Resident at Nepal in his letter no. 112, dated November 2, 1842, Foreign Political Consultation, 25th November, nos. 31-35, had informed the Officiating Secretary, Foreign Department, Government of India, that the Bettiah Raja had been extremely helpful to the Resident and that during the past five years large batches of troops had passed through Bettiah and their demands for supplies, etc., had been made by the Bettiah Raja. The Bettiah Raja had also fixed up a house for

Col. Bradshaw, Resident at Sugauli and had allowed the buildings and lands to be used for the purposes of Nepal Residency. In 1857 when Rana Jang Bahadur moved down through Bettiah with his troops to the aid of the British, the Maharaja of Bettiah made all arrangements for safe passage of the Nepalese army and for their supplies. From Foreign Secret Consultation, 25th September, nos. 115-116, it appears that the Secretary to the Government of Bengal in his no. 1502, dated the 30th August 1857, had reported to the Secretary to the Government of India that the Commissioner of Patna be informed that the district of those provinces to the north of the Ganges were exposed to great danger in consequence of the occupation of Gorakhpur by the rebels. He further mentioned that there were no troops at the disposal of the British Government to oppose the advance of the rebels into Saran and Champaran districts and it was suggested that if His Lordship in his Council see fit the Resident of Nepal may move to procure a march of 1,000 Gurkhas to guard Champaran and a like number for the protection of stations at Chapra and Muzaffarpur. The Secretary to the Foreign Department in his letter no. 3620, dated the 8th September 1857, informed the Secretary to the Government of Bengal that the Resident at Nepal had anticipated the matter and 1,000 Gurkhas had already been sent to Sugauli and Motihari to enable the Magistrate of Champaran to hold the district. The Maharaja of Bettiah had also tried to do his best to help the British Government. He had sent 200 of his own men to surprise a band of rebels who were at a place called Chintaman in the heart of Nepal Raja's jungles and he gave this information to the officer of the Yeomanry Cavalry. There are also other letters in the National Archives showing that the Maharaja of Bettiah was trying his utmost to capture the rebels and help in supplies for the Yeomanry Cavalry who were in the pursuit of the rebels.

The District Magistrate of Saran and the Local Magistrate of Champaran had to be alert about the boundary disputes between Nepal and the district of Saran which included Champaran. There are documents showing that Mr. Yule, *Thikadar* of Ramnagar in Champaran, made bitter complaints in April, 1854, that the Nepalese had taken possession of portions of Ramnagar. Such alleged encroachments used to be promptly looked into by the authorities at both the end. Resident Lawrence appeared to have taken interest in the matter and impressed on the Government of Nepal on the necessity of a careful relaying of the boundary. He had some controversial *chowkis* removed much inside Nepal. He further requested the Magistrate of Champaran to prevent any new *chowkis* being established until the boundary is inspected.

As there were similar complaints from Purnea and Tirhut and many of the boundary marks were found to have been removed or had fallen down or inundated the necessity of re-surveying and relaying of the boundary was fully realised. The Magistrates were

asked to make minute inspection of the boundary pillars and the countryside on the boundary. The Secretary to the Government of Bengal was ultimately requested by the Foreign Department, Fort William that the Governor-General in Council be requested to make necessary arrangements before the cold season for appointing a Commissioner and a Surveyor to lay down the frontier line and to settle the boundary disputes between Nepal and the *Zillahs* of Champaran, Tirhut and Purnea.

The earliest postal communication with Nepal with India ran through Champaran. It appears that the *dak* line from Sugauli to Kathmandu was established for the sole purpose of keeping up the correspondence with the Resident at Nepal and its establishments. There used to be a Postmaster at Sugauli and Motihari particularly for the Nepal *dak*. Apart from postal runners *banghy* parcels used to be sent by *banghy* carriers. Route from Sugauli to Kathmandu ran through Moorla, Raghunathpur, Chapkalia, Tajpur and Semrabassa and after a few other *dak chowkis* at Bhimpheedi, Chitlong, Thankot and then to Kathmandu. The document in the National Archives, New Delhi, shows that the Resident at Kathmandu occasionally used to address the Motihari Postmaster direct and the Director-General of Post Offices at India had to ask the Postmaster at Motihari to adhere to his orders and arrangements and not to carry out the Resident's orders.

The exports from Nepal through Champaran were *ghee*, edible grain, wax, spices, etc., while the imports were edible grain, wheat, metals, cotton, etc. The trade was carried mainly through pack ponies, head-loads and carts. There used to be an excise duty but the duty was very light and practically had no effect. The route entering Nepal territory near Kutkenwa in Champaran was very important as a trade route.

#### *Separation of Champaran.*

Till 1866 the present district of Champaran was a part of Saran district. A Magistrate, however, had been stationed at Motihari since 1837. After Champaran district was separated from Saran the district limit has had no major changes excepting in the *Diara* area. A riverain district has its local problem of some small changes owing to the fluvial action of the border rivers. When the rivers are in flood they form one sheet of water but after the flood they run into separate channels and this causes a certain amount of administrative problem to the district of Saran as well as to the districts of Shahabad in Bihar and Balia in Uttar Pradesh. As a result, occasionally some villages from one district have to be transferred to another for the time being.

#### *Famine.*

In an agricultural country like Saran famine has proved a great scourge to the people. The district had witnessed a series of severe

famines in 1770, 1783, 1866, 1874 and 1897. There had also been certain periods of acute scarcity condition within the last two decades.

### *Subsequent Administrative History.*

After the movement of 1857-1859 the district had remained on the whole quiet. In 1861 the police powers of the zamindars were abolished and the administration of police throughout the local jurisdiction of the Magistrate of the district was vested in the District Superintendent of Police under the general control and direction of the Magistrate. But the District Magistrate was not expected to interfere in the internal organisation and discipline of the police force. The comparative peace and security encouraged the British administrator to extend education and public health measures in the interior. In 1879 Gopalganj Subdivision was sanctioned by the Government. Siwan Subdivision had been created earlier in 1848. The establishment of municipalities at Chapra, Revelganj and Siwan in 1864, 1876 and 1869, respectively, marked the growth of local self-government within the district. The first railway line was constructed between 1881-1884. A District Board was established in 1886 under the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885.

### *Social Reforms.*

The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by a strong wave of renaissance throughout India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati and others had raised their voice against various existing social evils, like restrictions of caste system, marriage and education. The Brahmo Samaj founded earlier by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati have rightly been described as the fore-runners of a period of renaissance. Saran district was also fully affected by this movement. The introduction of the occidental system of education in preference to oriental type of education through *tols* and *maktabs* had far reaching effects.

In his autobiography, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, First President of India Republic who comes from the district of Saran, has mentioned that sea-voyage was discouraged and held with a certain amount of contempt in Saran even as late as 1904. A few years before Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha had returned from England after being called to the Bar. Mr. Sinha was asked to do penance for being taken back to his caste, the caste elders took it that he had committed a sin by crossing the seas. Mr. Sinha refused to do so. But the immediate effect was that students for a few years did not dare go abroad for fear of social ostracism. Rajendra Prasad had to abandon the idea of going to England to sit for the I. C. S. Examination. Dr. Ganesh Prasad of Balia district had his mother's place in Saran. Dr. Ganesh Prasad returned home in 1904 after obtaining his Tripos from England in Mathematics. Rajendra Prasad, his elder brother, Mahendra Prasad and two other co-villagers went to Balia and stayed with Dr. Ganesh Prasad for a couple of days. Within a week there was a public



meeting at Chapra, the headquarters of Saran, where the young men who had dined with Ganesh Prasad were named and ex-communicated. It mattered little to Rajendra Prasad and his brother who were studying in Calcutta but the effect was drastic on the two other young men. They were turned out from their hostel and no hotel would accept them. One of them had to give up his studies.

The Annual Kayastha Conferences had a firm grip throughout North India and Saran was no exception. The Kayastha Conference had started since 1884, a year before the First Session of the Indian National Congress. Although the old guards were orthodox in their views the young generation had brought in ideas which were eroding the citadel. There was a wide agitation against the payment of *Tilak* a forced monetary payment by the bride's party before marriage was fixed. The Hindus and particularly the Kayastha families used to spend lavishly on ceremonial occasions which brought in a high incidence of indebtedness. Moonshee Pearee Lall raised his voice against reducing the high expenditure. His life was even threatened because he wanted to change the social custom. Educational reforms were also in the programme of the Kayastha Conferences.

The Saran branch of the Arya Samaj in the first decade of the twentieth century was carefully nursed by Baijnath Prasad, a school teacher, Pandit Ambica Dutt Vyas and others. The *Gorakshani* movement had also a great hold on the villages. The average well-to-do family in the village used to set apart a palmful of rice everyday which used to be sold and the proceeds utilised for the maintenance of the *Gosalas*. This was known as the *Muthia* system.

Rajendra Prasad, Sachchidanand Sinha, Mahesh Narayan, Nand Kishore Lal and others who were intimately connected with Saran took an active interest and organised the Bihari Students' Association and Conference. The first Conference was held in Patna in 1906 and through Rajendra Prasad's influence quite a large number from Saran district participated. Since then the Conference used to meet every year and the Bhagalpur Sessions in 1917 was presided over by Gandhiji who broke away from Champaran for a few days. Another reformist force was supplied by the Bihar Provincial Conference which was two years younger than the Students' Conference. Here also Rajendra Prasad, Braj Kishore Prasad, Mahesh Narayan, Sachchidanand Sinha and others had a great part to play. As a matter of fact, the Bihar Provincial Conference had passed the resolution of Non-Co-operation earlier than the Indian National Congress. Both the Students' Conference and the Bihar Provincial Conference had social reforms along with political reforms as their objectives.

The Anti-Purdah Movement in Bihar had been started by Braj Kishore Prasad who was closely associated with Saran district. This movement started as a result of Gandhiji's visit to Champaran in 1917.

In the course of his work in connection with the Indigo Movement in Champaran district Gandhiji started a series of schools in the interior and some of them were put in charge of ladies who had joined Gandhiji's camp from outside Bihar. This contact gave rise to the idea of the Anti-Purdah Movement in Bihar. The fruit is seen today when there is a girls' college in Chapra and a large number of girls' schools scattered throughout the district. Co-education is a common feature in the educational institutions.

### *Political Movement.*

The reformist movement both in the social and political fields referred to earlier made the progress of the political movement from the first decade of the twentieth century smoother. From the very early days of the Indian National Congress founded in 1885 Bihar was associated with it. Some of the sponsors of the Bihar Provincial Conference that started its career from nearabout 1904 took an active interest in the affairs of the Indian National Congress. It is a remarkable fact that although Bihar was a part of the province of Bengal a separate Provincial Congress Committee was allowed to be formed in Bihar in 1906 and this separate committee actively functioned. This was more or less due to the enthusiasm of men like Rajendra Prasad, Sachchidanand Sinha, Mahesh Narain and others. Some of them had become the leaders of the youth movement and as mentioned earlier had organised the Bihar Students' Conference which started holding its session annually from 1906. The association of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of the Indian Republic, with the Congress commences from 1906 when he joined the Calcutta session as a volunteer. From 1906 to 1910 Rajendra Prasad was associated with the Congress but not vitally. Through his influence some persons from Saran district used to attend the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress. In 1911 he became a delegate from Bihar and a member of the All-India Congress Committee and since then Rajendra Prasad's association with the Indian National Congress has been intimate and forceful and due to his influence the Congress movement in Bihar and particularly in Saran district became a force. The Congress session at Lucknow in December 1916 was joined by Gandhiji who had just returned from South Africa a few months before. Rajendra Prasad had attended the Lucknow session but he did not have any direct touch with Gandhiji and there was not even a casual talk between them. It was at this session that one Raj Kumar Shukla, a sturdy peasant from Champaran, met Gandhiji and requested him to move a resolution regarding the troubles of the indigo cultivators in the hands of the European planters. Gandhiji refused as he did not have any direct knowledge of the problem. Braj Kishore Prasad who was also intimately connected with Saran district and a close associate of Rajendra Prasad in the reformist movement in Bihar moved this resolution. Raj Kumar Shukla extracted a promise from Gandhiji that he would visit Champaran and in

fulfilment of this promise Gandhiji came to Motihari in 1917. It is at Motihari that Rajendra Prasad had met Gandhiji for the first time.

By this time a number of young men from Bihar like Maulana Mazharul Haq, Dharnidhar, Ram Nawami Prasad, Hassan Imam, Shri Krishna Sinha, Anugrah Narain Sinha and Sayed Mahmood had been closely associated with the Indian National Congress.

Delegates from Bihar used to attend the Indian National Congress from the very early years. The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal from 1905 had its repercussions in Bihar and the district of Saran was affected as well. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. S. K. Sinha and late Dr. A. N. Sinha who were students in Calcutta during these momentous years had thrown themselves heart and soul in the movement. The Swadeshi Movement had its ancillary in a bomb-cult followed by the revolutionary wing of the nationalists. It is common knowledge that many of the revolutionaries and their agents had percolated to the different districts of Bihar and helped in organising anti-British ideas. There was a time in 1906-1908 when every Bengali getting down at the railway stations of Saran district was shadowed by the C. I. D. men.

At that time there was a great move by the indigo cultivators not to grow indigo at the bid of the European planters because it was uneconomic. The *Amlas* of the planters were also very oppressive. This movement had its repercussion in Saran district as well. In 1908 there was an attempt to kill Mr. Kingsford, District and Sessions Judge of Muzaffarpur, by two Bengali boys for his cruel convictions when he was the Judge at Alipore in Bengal. By mistake, a bomb was thrown on the carriage which was supposed to be Mr. Kingsford's and the occupants Mrs. and Miss Kennedy, the wife and daughter of a local counsel were killed. One of the boys, Prafulla Chaki was arrested and shot himself dead. The other boy, Khudi Ram Bose, was arrested, tried and hanged at Muzaffarpur. The episode created a sensation all over Bihar and Saran was also very much affected.

A separate commissionership known as Tirhut Division comprising the districts of Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga was created in the year of the execution of Khudi Ram Bose (1908). In 1912 the province of Bihar and Orissa was separated from Bengal. The next important incident which affected Bihar and the district of Saran was the visit of Gandhiji to Champaran in 1917. The field had already been prepared and it was no wonder that the batch of workers with Gandhiji from outside Bihar were quickly joined by Rajendra Prasad, Mazharul Haq, Shambhu Sharan, Anugraha Narain Sinha, Braj Kishore Prasad, Ram Nawami Prasad and others. The technique of non-violence and non-co-operation of Gandhiji won this historical struggle and the miseries of the indigo cultivators were removed by an Act. During Gandhiji's stay in Champaran district he could snatch away a few days to pay a visit

to Gopalganj in Saran district where he held a mass meeting. Throughout his stay over six months in Champaran district he used to be visited by hundreds of men from Saran district with their grievances and requested to visit Saran. The Champaran visit of Gandhiji had a great political and social effect in Saran district. In the social field an Anti-Purdah Movement in Saran district was sponsored by Braj Kishore Prasad.

The later political history of Saran follows the trends that were common for the whole of India. The first Great War of 1914-1918 had its effect. A large number of Biharis and particularly from Saran well-noted for martial spirit had joined the war at a critical moment. There were great expectations but the Montagu Chelmsford's Reform proposals published in July, 1918, were felt to be extremely inadequate. The subsequent incidents came rapidly one after another. The Rowlatt Act, Jallianwalabagh incident at Amritsar and the horrors that were committed in the name of Martial Law in the Punjab created unrest and frustration throughout India. The Muslims had resented the humiliating terms offered to Turkey and organised a mass *Khilafat* Movement which for a pretty long time worked in close co-operation with the Congress. In alliance with the *Khilafat* leaders, Gandhiji started the great Non-Co-operation Movement in 1929 based on strictly non-violence principles. Bihar received a close attention from Gandhiji and the first batch of the Congress leaders of All-India importance. A big meeting was organised at Darauli in the district of Saran on the eve of *Kartik Purnima Mela* under the leadership of Dr. Rajendra Prasad who had thrown away his lucrative practice as an advocate in the Patna High Court at the call of Gandhiji. From that moment Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the uncrowned king of Bihar and had a large hand in shaping modern Bihar. In the wake of this movement Maulana Mazharul Haq had constructed an *Ashram* on the Patna-Dinapore Road which subsequently became the famous Sadaqat Ashram, the headquarters of the State Branch of Indian National Congress. The National College at the initiation of the Non-Co-operation Movement was located at Sadaqat Ashram. The Non-Co-operation Movement was nursed in full vigour in Bihar and the contribution of Saran district was quite considerable.

The appointment of Simon Commission with non-Indian members to draw up a blue print of future India was boycotted. Dr. Rajendra Prasad again gave the leadership to this boycott movement. When Simon Commission visited Patna there was a great assembly of people including hundreds from Saran district at the Patna Railway Station with black flags and a full-throated slogan "Simon go back".

The next phase of the Non-Co-operation Movement known as the Civil Disobedience Movement initiated by Gandhiji in April, 1930, was fully implemented in Saran district. In connection with

the *Satyagraha* Movement sponsored by Gandhiji a whirlwind tour of the different parts of Bihar was done by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. One of the famous meetings he addressed was at Maharajganj. Sometime after Dr. Rajendra Prasad was arrested in Chapra and sent to Hazaribagh Central Jail. After the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1931 the *Satyagraha* was called off though peaceful picketting was allowed for *Swadeshi* purposes. The Non-Co-operation Movement in all its phases had always received the fullest support from the district of Saran. This was, more or less, due to the constant tours of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and his followers throughout the district. One impact of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's visit to the interior may be mentioned. The village Chakia, police-station Bhorey was notorious as a village of criminals. This village was visited by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in 1926 and he spent a day there. The result was seen in 1930 when hundreds from this village went to jail. Boycott of foreign goods in the villages had been pushed up to an extreme end and even kerosene oil was completely boycotted for some time. The village Panchayat system stood very well introduced for some time and the number of cases going to the courts had a distinct fall.

Another important event was the great Bihar Earthquake of 1934. Saran was not so badly affected as some of the districts of Bihar like Monghyr, Champaran and Muzaffarpur. A Bihar Central Relief Committee was formed with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as Chairman and worked in close co-operation with the Provincial Government of Bihar and Orissa. From the election of 1935 the district of Saran has shown her pro-Congress trends. In all the elections since 1935 the Congress Party's nominees have been the majority of the successful candidates. This district has closely followed the dictates of All-India Congress Committee and in the chaotic days of 1942 on the wake of the Quit India Movement many of the local leaders of Saran district played their part manfully courting arrests, working underground and suffering great hardships. At many places the police and the magistracy had to open fire and made mass arrest. The communal outburst in 1946 unfortunately had its repercussion in this district as well. A number of Muslims had left the district for Pakistan. The formation of the Interim Ministry in 1946 had to tackle this great problem. In 1947 came the Independence for India as a Republic.

We are far too close to the momentous event of the attainment of independence and a correct appraisal of the contribution of Saran district may not be quite objective. We may, however, mention at one place a few persons of Saran district who played an important role. They are Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Mazharul Haq, Shri Mahendra Prasad, Dr. Sayyad Mahmud, Shri Jai Prakash Narain and Shri Jaglal Chaudhury. There are other local leaders as well. A brief reference has already been made to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Mazharul Haq and Shri Mahendra Prasad. Dr. Sayyad

Mahmud closely followed the footsteps of his father-in-law, Maulana Mazharul Haq. He was twice a Minister in the Bihar Cabinet after independence. He was later elected Member of Parliament. Shri Jai Prakash Narain, another all-India figure comes from Sitabdiara. Receiving the early training and education in the States he has been in the forefront of the Indian politics for several decades. He was once an active member of the Indian National Congress and was imprisoned in 1942. His subsequent escape from Hazaribagh Central Jail and remaining underground for a considerable period had sent a stir throughout India. Saran district being his homeland was particularly agitated on his escape from the jail. He became a member of the Socialist Party and is now actively engaged in *Bhudan* work as a very close collaborator of Vinoba Bhave. Shri Jaglal Chaudhury, a leader coming from the Harijan community had given up his studies in the Calcutta Medical College to join the Non-Co-operation Movement. His son was shot dead in the course of the movement. He took a great interest in trying to implement prohibition in Saran district when he was Excise Minister. He still continues to be a member of the Legislative Assembly. Some of the other men of the district who had actively collaborated with Dr. Rajendra Prasad in the Congress Movement from the very beginning are Sri Ram Udar Singh (Rahul Sankirtayan), Sri Jiten Ram, Sri Mahendra Singh, Sri Girish Tiwari and Sri Mathura Prasad who had been the Private Secretary of Dr. Rajendra Prasad as long as he was alive.

The later events refer to administrative history and have been covered in the text of different chapters. The most important recent landmark is the abolition of zamindari. This district had several old aristocratic zamindar families like Hathua, Manjha and Bettiah, etc. The other administrative changes have been covered in the chapter on General Administration.